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Sharing Accountability

Universal Human Values and Global Responsibilities

New global issues, thrust to the fore by political, economic and ecological concerns, are demanding fresh thinking on human values — and their translation into everyday rights and duties. Furthermore, the relationship between human rights and human responsibilities, an always difficult one down through history, poses enormously challenging questions in our rapidly changing modern age.

To cite but one example: where does accountability start — and end — in the battle between the environmentalist, trying to keep carbon dioxide out of the air, and the planner, trying to stimulate industrial development and an improvement in the lives of the poor? Advocates can come down on either side armed with a plethora of human rights, responsibilities — and, too often, unfortunately — self-righteousness.

Our world today is filled with such tensions. Between cultures and religions seeking to guard and nourish their identities and the world beamed in, with no heed to national and cultural borders, by TV satellite. Between the cries for independence in Quebec, Kurdistan or the Baltics — and the hard realities of the interdependence of the world's money markets, commodities flows and other financial systems. Whether a matter of life, environment, religion, or politics, it seems that down through all these conflicts, there rings a common knell of uncertainty. How can conflicting values reconcile with shared responsibilities?

A value, it is explained to Troilus (in Shakespeare's drama), "dwells not in any particular will." It is precious in and of itself. But what are the universal human values — and how are they relevant to the modern condition? An equally fundamental question: how can we build on these different values a common base for shared accountability?

This issue of WORK IN PROGRESS attempts to reflect a range of thinking, arising primarily from scholars associated with the work at the United Nations University, on the theme: "universal human values and global responsibilities." One of the five major priority areas in the UNU's Second Medium-Term Perspective (for the years 1990-95) is focused on the different expressions of human values, and on how these can either cause conflict and tension; or enhance and lead society's capacity to govern the affairs of its members in today's era of rapid and massive change.

Human values can be, at one and the same time, the generating force of — and the first to be affected by — the transformations in international political scenarios, population growth, scientific and technological advances, and the globalization of the mass media and communication and the world economic order that characterize our age.

Fundamental changes are affecting international relations, leading to a major shift from a bipolar to a multipolar world. Along with this multipolarization, there is a decline in the influence of monolithic political ideologies, a relaxation of regional tensions, and the increasing dissemination of many different cultural values.

This is paralleled by a rise in sensitivity to ethnic and culture-based identities, and a persistent and growing demand for real progress in guaranteeing basic human rights. A word of explanation is required here to clarify the concept of "universal human values" as understood in the studies of the United Nations University. The concept provides grounds for pursuing three major avenues of thinking: (1) the diversity and plurality of value systems; (2) their codification as human rights and duties; and (3) our global responsibilities as human species in spite of the diversity of values.

All societies have tended to build into their way of life a system of values — arising from collective beliefs and motivations gained through understanding and feelings towards nature, their fellow human beings and a sense of the transcendent. Over the millennia, many different sorts of values have come to exist. Various laws, codes, and institutions have been established to consolidate and enforce these values in society. A diversity of culture and civilizations appeared on different parts of earth.

But in the ebb and flow of cultures throughout history, certain civilizations evolved more sophisticated scientific and technological establishments — due to a complex mosaic of historical, geographic, economic, religious, cultural and social factors. A glimpse of a fragment of how this happens: Europe's need for alternatives to wood fuels, after their medieval forests had been cut down, triggered efforts to mine coal at ever deeper levels; a by-product was James Watts' steam engine. It helped usher in the Industrial Revolution with one of its spin-offs the coal-powered, armour-clad warship that extended Europe's colonial power and sway over other cultures. In the jungle of the Amazon, on the contrary, man-nature relationship evolved for centuries without rejecting each other in mutual support and harmony.

Dominant cultures, through history, have generally sought to stake a claim on the "universality" of their own beliefs and ways of life — sometimes by persuasion, more frequently by force or cohesion. It has now come to be recognized, however, that diversity and plurality in value systems is a fundamental reality — indeed, one of the truest, and most widely accepted, universal value of our time.

Despite the rich diversity in the total human endeavour, there are certain common or universal values, shared by most societies on the planet today — as, for example, the fundamental right to life, or the right of a child to a family environment. The "universal declaration of human rights" approved by the UN General Assembly in 1948, sought to identify those values and responsibilities — independently of how they might be legally enforceable in an international sense. This must stand as one of the most significant attempts to date to codify universal rights and values.

The United Nations concept of "universal human values," it should be stressed, in no way endorses the notion of a rigid set of value systems to be imposed hegemonically on all cultures. It stresses rather the respect for human dignity and self-realization that underlies most value systems in the modern global community.

So too with global responsibilities. They should not be the province, or the burden, of any one political, cultural or military superpower. Rather, responsibilities should emerge as a natural (and healthy) development in the coexistence of differing value systems, to be shared by individuals and societies. The sense of responsibility needs to be seen as an immensely important human value itself — and certainly one that must be universally shared if it has any relevance and validity.

The fundamental global transformations that are now underway — politically, economically, environmentally — add an extra and often perplexing dimension to the debate over what, in fact, are universal human values and how they can be codified as human rights and duties. We have seen conflicts arising, as noted earlier, between human needs and the rights of other species, as well as between the rights of cultures and nations and the rights of humanity as a whole, including future generations.

Some of the moral contradictions at stake have surfaced in the recent struggle between loggers and groups of indigenous forest dwellers in Sarawak, Malaysia.

An economy based on short-term exploitation of the rainforests for timber is in conflict with the rights of people that depend on the same forests for many of their long-term basic needs. The state government wants the income from the timber now to pay for roads and health services, but as a result rural communities are losing clean water supplies, wild game and valuable materials from the forest.

The broader interests of humanity demand the preservation of the biological diversity of life on earth. Thus environmentalists support a drastic reduction in the rate of timber harvesting, but large numbers of loggers and their families already depend on the timber trade. What are the acceptable generational exchanges? Jobs for loggers today or a rich and varied forest for the world of their children.

New and multilateral approaches are required to resolve the sorts of question posed by today's value conflicts transformations. The nomenclatures, codes, and models that have been traditionally used to describe social realities and processes are no longer adequate to our times. The scale of global change requires more light on the complex relationship between the values, rights and responsibilities of a global community about to enter the 21st century.

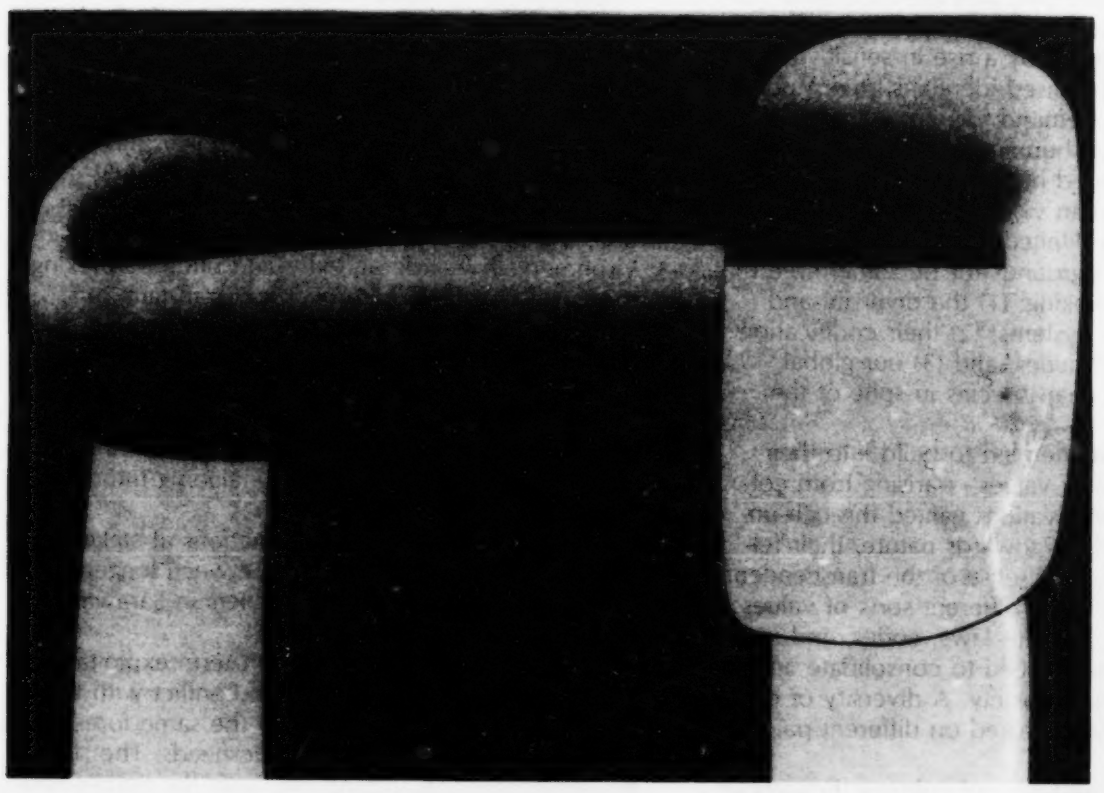
This issue of WORK IN PROGRESS presents the thinking of scholars across different cultures about some of the complex interlinkages of values, rights and responsibilities in the world today — reflected mainly in contributions to recent UNU meetings and publications. As is the practice of this publication, selections by authors not directly connected with the work of the University, but linked by common intellectual concerns, are also included. Comment from the international scholarly community on the contents of this issue of WORK IN PROGRESS is actively solicited and encouraged as a means of fostering global intellectual debate on important issues of the day. — **Editor** ■

Understanding Culture in Global Change

By Eleonora Barbieri Masini

Despite all the intellectual brainpower that has been brought to bear on the changes that have been sweeping modern life technologically, economically, and politically — there has been little in-depth investigation, argues Eleonora Masini, of the cultural dimensions of these enormous changes in the fabric of the global society. This is due, she says to a number of reasons, historical and otherwise. During the 1960s and the early '70s, technology was seen as in the driver's seat of change. This was followed, in the late 1970s and early 80s, by the notion that economic forces could most relevantly explain change. Only in the late 1980s, says Masini, have we come to sense how forcefully culture is an often misunderstood force for change.

The following, which highlights some crucial cultural issues of the next century, is excerpted from her contribution to Coexistence in a Multipolar World and International Networks, *the second volume of the* New Global Science: From Chaos to Order *series, edited by H. Usui and T. Uchida (Yushindo, Tokyo, 1990, in Japanese). Dr. Masini was the co-ordinator of the UNU project on Household, Gender and Age which did field studies in Argentina, Brazil, China, Colombia, and Sri Lanka. She is the Chair, Executive Council, World Futures Studies Federation, Rome, Italy. —* **Editor**



Over the last several decades, the world has experienced unprecedented levels of complexity, which have been difficult to understand in themselves, and compounded by equal degrees of uncertainty. Many aspects of this complexity — technological, economic, political and social — have been analysed. However, one aspect which could well be the major one in the foreseeable future — namely cultural changes and shifts — has, for a number of reasons, been examined in less depth.

The other changes, often more visible or more rapid, were believed to be of greater importance. In the 1960s and early 70s, technological changes were believed to be the driving force. In the second half of the 70s and well into the 80s, economic changes — and in particular changes in economic mechanisms — were believed to be crucial. Only in the late 1980s did the cultural aspects of change begin to emerge more forcefully. These changes were, of course, there all along, but not expressed with much vigour.

In my view, it is cultural change that will be at the centre of world issues in the coming decades. In order to appreciate this, some clarification of what this change is and how it might be measured is in order. First, it needs to be appreciated that cultural changes are very much slower in pace than are technological or economic changes. This fact emerged very clearly, for example, in the field work conducted in Asia and Latin America as part of the UNU project on household, gender and age on value changes in the family or in rural communities.

In our work in Colombia, video cameras were given directly to women in the field so that they could record their experiences themselves. All of this is still very experimental. But quite independent of the technical quality of the work (some of which was subsequently used in a professionally produced videotape on the work of UNU), the content of these tapes suggests very clearly what may be actually happening and changing at the cultural level.

Cultural research needs to be seen not only in quantitative terms, but also — and primarily — in qualitative terms. This was an approach we used with the women interviewed, in an attempt to elicit information over and beyond quantitative data: through such techniques as participant observation and life histories. These approaches — stressing openness of response — greatly helped researchers to see how women really perceive themselves. The new perceptions about the nature of cultural change are reinforced by hard, quantitative data about, for example, ongoing change in the population structure at the global level.

We see, for instance, growing aged populations in many Northern countries. In the OECD countries, the population over 65 doubled between 1950 and 1980 — an increase in absolute terms from 47 to 93 million. This is a growth which could well be irreversible. OECD citizens over the age of 75 in 1980 made up 4.4 per cent of the population; in the year 2000, it is expected to be 5.4 per cent, and by 2025 is projected at 7.2 per cent.

If we compare these numbers with those from the South, there is a staggering difference. Almost half (45 per cent) of the approximately 600 million Africans are now under 15 years of age. So are 34 per cent of almost 3 billion Asians and 38 per cent of the 458 million Latin Americans. It is not hard to imagine the future needs of the young of the South in terms of food, education and health — to say nothing of the health services that will be demanded in a rapidly greying North.

All of these new demographics help to explain the new waves of migration that are underway — population movements that are over and beyond the more traditional migrations from rural to urban areas. The repercussions for the future of these latest migrations could be enormous. In relatively recent history, there has been the immense tide from Latin America towards the United States and Canada. There are also the migrations from Indonesia to Australia, from Sri Lanka, Thailand and the Philippines to the Middle East — especially to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia* Also deserving of special attention to the student of cultural change is the new migration to Japan to fill low-paid job needs — because Japan has always been a monocultural society, this infusion of foreign workers is particularly interesting.

In Africa, there is a long history of migration to France; migratory flows to Germany, Italy, Spain and other European countries are more recent. The Mediterranean region is perhaps the most involved: including senders (from Turkey to Morocco and some of the south Magreb countries) and receivers. Data on this migratory process, which is occurring very rapidly and in the context of aging societies, are not easily available. Italy, however, is estimated already to have 2 million migrants.

More recently, there has been an increase of migration from the countries of Eastern Europe to Western Europe. This needs to be carefully examined in terms of its culture base. Here we have people with layers of behviour, language, religion, customs, etc. who have had to coexist for two generations with a Marxist culture. Culture is not shredded overnight, as television might sometimes seem to indicate — it requires a far longer span of time to change than do other aspects of a society. The "interiorized" values of education, however much they might be rejected, are not forgotten easily.

It might even be said, for example, that the very profound changes brought on by something like the French Revolution — the uplifting revolutionary values of *"liberté, égalité, fraternité"* — are principles which, two hundred years later, are still not part of the culture of the West. This seems particularly true of *"fraternité"* or "brotherhood." Hence, even two hundred years can be insufficient for a radical cultural change.

Although not enough research has been done on what it is that stimulates (or resists) cultural change, there are a few examples which may provide useful indications for the future. Field work among two generations of Italian families who had migrated to Canada at two distinct points in time — the first in the early 1900s, the second after World War II nearly a half-century later — is very revealing. On the one hand, there were great cultural changes — in clothing, education, aspirations. At the same time, there was persistence of characteristics which were culturally Italian, very often from the southern part of Italy. What did not change culturally were important moments of life — birth, old age and death. All the symbols and behavioural ceremonies reappear as if nothing had changed in the life — of either generation — living in another country and in another culture.

Another interesting examples emerged from our studies on female migration from Sri Lanka to the Middle East in the UNU household, gender and age project. Here we had adult women leaving their homes for three to four years, so as to earn the money to build a home or educate their children. On their return home, after living in a completely different society, they reverted to exactly the same life and behaviour as before, within their family and their community. Possibly they have a little more status, a little more education, or better educated children — but their behaviour and their values are the same. This can be attributed to the fact that their own society and environment has not undergone any really sharp changes. In Sri Lanka, this was particularly the case with religious expression of culture — be it Buddhist, Hindu or Islamic.

While there are world-wide influences on the unification of cultures — the mass media, technology, economic and political forces — at the same time we are witnessing the re-emergence of identities at a cultural level. The revival of specific cultures in Europe has come increasingly to be marked by violence: the Basques in Spain, the Sicilians in Italy, the Celtic demands in Ireland, Scotland and Wales — and most recently the Armenians, the Azerbaijanis and others in the Soviet Union. All of these are showing inner strengths which oppose the homogenization of cultures by any one dominant set of values. To try and foresee the European society we might have in cultural terms, in the near and distant future, we have to hypothesize different possibilities.

In the short term, of course, there is bound to be considerable tension and conflict. Possibly the tensions will not be quite so strong in a united Germany — but they will be much stronger in other parts of Western Europe because of migration from Yugoslavia, Hungary or Poland.

The emerging ethnic group clashes in the Soviet Union — which are primarily of a cultural nature — may lead to a period of great unsettlement in the short term. This is due to the cultural differences themselves — but also because the changes going on in that part of the world are further reinforced by the irreversible trend of self-awareness throughout the world. People are no longer prepared to so readily give up their identities and their differences. ■

* Written in March 1990.

The Two "Maps" that Guide Culture

By Tariq Banuri

Culture, says Tariq Banuri, might be thought of as the "human software" which helps fill the gap between our needs and our physical and mental abilities to fulfil them. Culture is the filter through which we assimilate all our experiences and which enables us to act when confronted with life's varied realities. In the following discussion, he introduces the notion of two "maps" — one personal, one impersonal — within every cultural system.

The excerpt is from his chapter, "Modernization and Its Discontents," in the volume, Dominating Knowledge: Development, Culture and Resistance, *edited by Frédérique Apffel Marglin and Stephen A. Marglin. The book was published by Clarendon Press, Oxford, UK, as part of the Studies in Development Economics conducted by the UNU's World Institute for Economics Research (UNU/WIDER) in Helsinki, Finland. Dr. Banuri, a Pakistani economist, is a former Research Fellow at UNU/WIDER.* — **Editor**

"Personal" and "impersonal" maps are integral elements of every cultural system, whether traditional or modern. The tension between the two provides the principal dynamic of cultural evolution and social change. What distinguishes one culture from others is, in part, the uniqueness of the tension or balance between its component parts. Now, what are these two "maps"? It is easier to begin by describing them separately as two independent "cultures" and then to talk about the blend or the balance between them in an observed cultural system.

The "impersonal" map can be imagined as a culture in which everyone perceives herself or himself to have an impersonal relationship with other people, with the natural environment, and with knowledge. The distinguishing characteristic of such a view would be a perception of an individual as being separable or detached from the social, physical, or intellectual environment. This would be the economists' Robinson Crusoe model of society, where the environment itself is divisible into a finite number of partitions. The "personal" map, in contrast, can be imagined as a culture in which every person sees himself or herself as having only personal relationships. In this case, the sense of identity is created through identification rather than through separation. In such a culture, the social or physical environment cannot be conceived in terms of a certain limited number of attributes. Think, for example, of the difference between a house and a home, between an animal and a pet, between the person in the street and a friend. In each case, the former can be thought of in terms of a finite number of impersonal attributes — perhaps based on our own needs — while the complex nature of our relationship to the latter makes it impossible for us to perceive them only in terms of a few attributes.

Value Differences between Maps

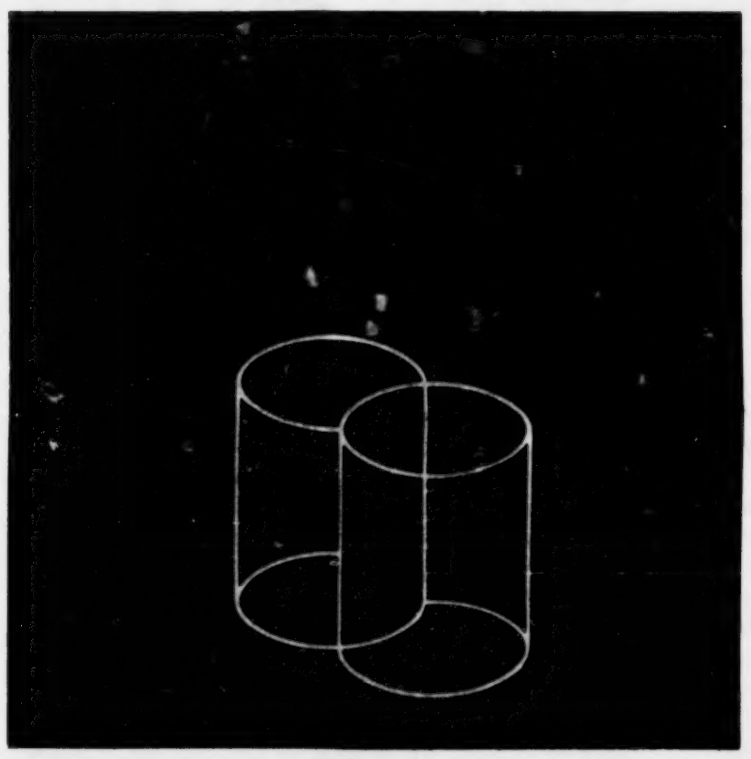
The differences between the two maps are not merely cosmetic. They have implications for our values, orientations and actions:

- *Impersonal relations* and attitudes are reflected in organization, rationality, linearity and control. They need to be static and rigid, to constantly define terms and freeze them in place, to perceive time as discrete rather than continuous, and to place the world in a conceptual grid. Not surprisingly, therefore, the "hard" social sciences such as economics and political science focus on relationships of exchange and power respectively, both of which belong in the impersonal sphere.
- *Personal relations* and attitudes are manifested in spontaneity, fluidity and bilateral vulnerability. They must evolve dynamically and they have to be flexible. Concepts and definitions keep changing and evolving, time is seen as continuous, and attention is directed mainly towards those aspects of social reality which elude the conceptual grid of impersonality.

Individualism vs. Holism

The "impersonal" view can be described by what the anthropologist Louis Dumont calls "individualism" — a characteristic, primarily, of Western societies, which values, "in the first place, the individual human being: every man is, in principle, an embodiment of humanity at large, and as such he is equal to every other man, and free."* Dumont contrasts individualism with "holism," a characteristic of those contemporary or ancient societies in which value is placed "in the first place, on order: the conformity of every element to its role in society — in a word, the society as a whole."**

Since my emphasis is on the nature of personal identity in different cultures, perhaps a better name than "holism" would be "relationalism" — in



which the individual sees herself or himself simply as the nexus of a web of relationships. Carol Gilligan, in her book, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*, makes a somewhat similar distinction between "masculine" and "feminine" forms of self-definition in Western countries. She sees men as defining the world in terms of moral absolutes, while women define it in terms of relationships.

The Impersonal Map: Everything Is Replaceable

On the impersonal map, everything is seen as being replaceable or substitutable; the personal view sees everything as unique and irreplaceable. The first perspective argues that valid knowledge derives only from the separation of the observer from the object of study; the latter view holds that true knowledge derives only from a personal relation between the observer and the observed.

A little reflection will reveal that the two "maps" are in no sense alternatives. Both exist in every culture; indeed in our everyday lives, we commonly rely on both ways of seeing without consciously distinguishing between them. Every culture provides its occupants with both its impersonal and its personal — or relational — identities.

Cultural Tensions: The Dynamics

All cultures are similar — yet different. Each culture manifests itself like another in the form of tension between the two "maps" — but these tensions represent unique balances in a given specific culture. Cultures differ from one another because of three different factors. First, a culture's specific character derives, in the first instance, from the "personal" map of its inhabitants. Second, cultures differ in the relative weight they give to the two maps in different spheres of human activity — how they balance and blend these two perspectives.

Last, as already noted, the nature and intensity of the tension between the "personal" and "impersonal" maps will vary from culture to culture. Indeed, the tension between the two maps can be seen as the primary source of cultural and social change. In other words, "culture" is not a static phenomenon — it is, rather, something which changes endogenously, responding to its own inner dictates and resolving the tensions between its component elements. All cultures, therefore, can be seen as unique and evolving resolutions of the interaction — the dialectic — between the "impersonal" and the "personal."

It is, in fact, possible to go even further and to argue that the coexistence of the "personal" and "impersonal" is not accidental. The two ways of seeing are necessary as complements to each other; each helps to limit the excesses which can result from an unfettering of the other. No human society can exist without both of these maps as components of its culture.

Modernity Rejected

The advocates of "modernity" — and its potentially positive impacts on development — seem to have taken precisely the opposite task. They look to distinguish between the two maps by asserting a hierarchical relationship between them. They have the confessed task of "rationalizing" the whole global society — by placing the world in a kind of conceptual grid, separating the two halves of human consciousness and strengthening one at the expense of the other.

Yet this view has clearly not yet been completely internalized by people in any society: in the West, East, North or South. Witness the resistance implicit in the refusal, at great personal cost, of people, throughout the world, to give up traditional approaches to knowledge, or in the rejection of such "impersonal" institutions as the state, the market, the school, the media — and even the social experts! ■

* Louis Dumont, *From Mandeville to Marx* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1977).
** See Dumont.

Illustrations in This Issue

Illustrating a topic so all encompassing, abstract and potentially emotion-laden as "Universal Human Values and Global Responsibilities" was no easy matter. After much thought, it was decided that art, with its own universal interpretations of human endeavour, would provide the best visual images to accompany some of the articles in this issue. We approached four well-known Japanese modern print artists, whose names are shown below, and also the wife of a deceased artist, Teppei Ujiyama, who graciously agreed to let WORK IN PROGRESS reproduce their work. The United Nations University is honoured to have the collaboration of these artists in producing this issue and expresses its deep appreciation to them for helping to present the timely issue covered. Regrettably, it is not possible to do full justice to their fine works by producing them in colour.

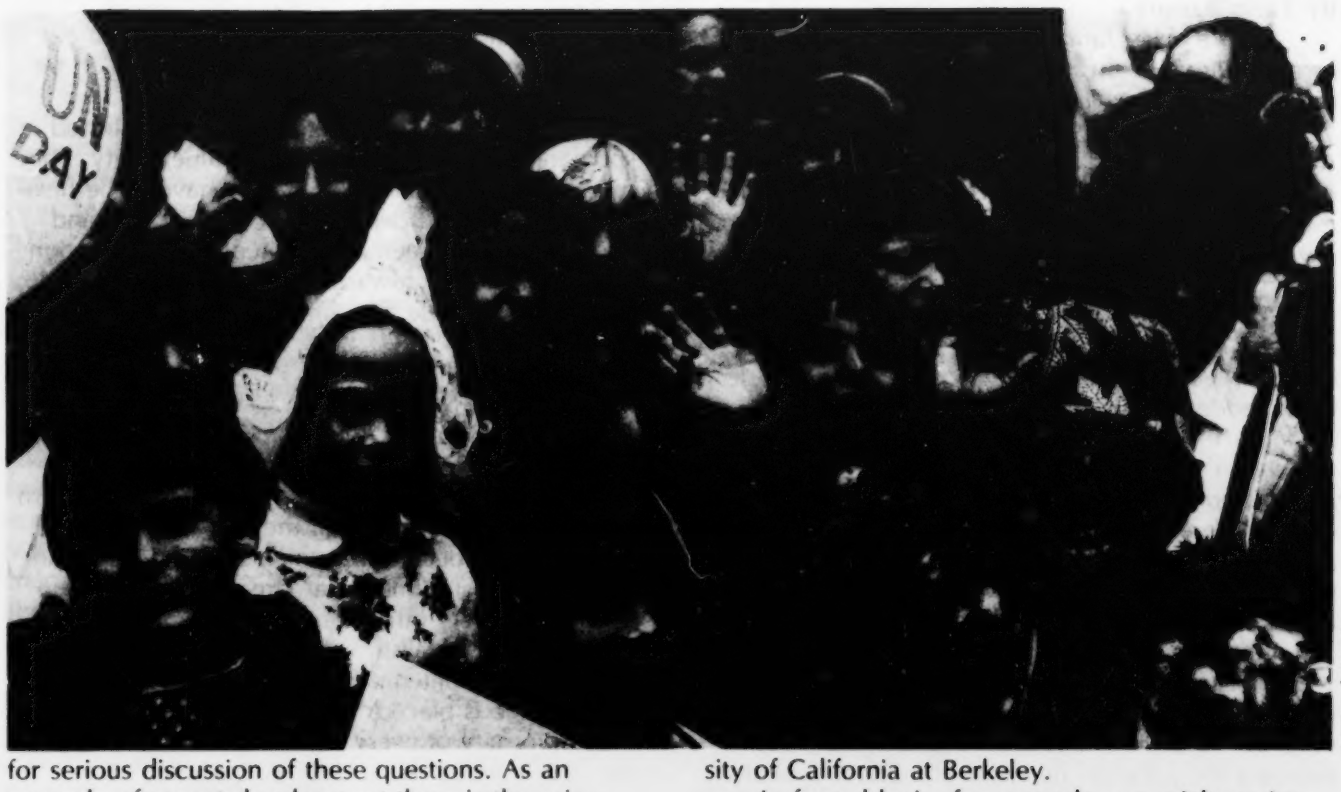
The works are, in the order of appearance:
Page 1: *Fulcrum A*, by Yutaka TAKAYANAGI (silk-screen, 63 × 63 cm, 1986).
Page 2: *Red, White, Black*, by Sadamasa MOTONAGA (silk-screen, 33 × 47 cm, 1979).
Page 3: *Fuga 5*, Yutaka FUNAI (screen print, 46 × 46 cm, 1972).
Page 8: *My Space and My Dimension*, by Yoshisuke FUNASAKA (wood-block print, silk-screen, 59 × 56 cm, 1980).
Page 9: *Dynasty's Five Themes*, by Teppei UJIYAMA (silk-screen, 50.5 × 35.0 cm, 1976), reprinted from *Encyclopedia of Prints* (Tokyo Shoseki, Tokyo, 1985).

READEX FICHE

Seeking a Common Basis for a Global Human Society

By Michael Mutsuo Yanase

In his consideration of the linkages between scientific and spiritual value systems, Michael Mutsuo Yanase seems to be very much on Einstein's philosophical and moral wave lengths. In particular, he comes down on the side of Einstein's observation that "man is here for the sake of other men." Or, as Yanase puts it, the main role in the relationship between science and technology should be that played by man — for the benefit of his fellow human beings. The problem is in finding some set of common values to aid people around the globe to recognize this. He suggests that such commonality might be found in the seemingly unlikely link-up of theological concepts of space and time with new logical constructs from the world of computer programming. Father Yanase, a Jesuit philosopher on the faculty of Sophia University in Tokyo, brings to this issue important strands from both his Roman Catholic theological training and his Japanese cultural upbringing. The following is excerpted from the paper he presented at a 1987 Tokyo symposium on "Science, Technology and Spiritual Values — An Asian Approach to Modernization," jointly sponsored by the UNU and Sophia University, Tokyo. — **Editor**



United Nations

The problem of science and technology and spiritual values is quite often discussed, but I would like here to investigate the problem from a different aspect. I want to emphasize that the actor who plays the main role in these problems is man himself — whether we are talking of science and technology, religion and faith, or the relation between the two. This argues for investigating the problem of man from a more fundamental point of view.

Man is the actor on the stage but, at the same time, he is an observer. He is thus both subject and object — present as an individual but also as a member of a group. He is local as well as global.

East Meets West — In Myself

In carrying out my investigations of the interactions of science and technology and spiritual values — and the central role of man in both arenas — I follow the Western methodology — the way of thinking which I was taught all through my education and formation as a Jesuit priest. At the same time, I was born and brought up in the Orient — and received an academic formation in the cultural milieu of Japan, which is deeply influenced by the classical Chinese tradition.

As to the Western approach, natural science has built up an astounding, unified world picture — extending over a hundred billion years of time and over a hundred billion light years of space, all made up of the same elementary particles and governed by the same laws of physics. There is no doubt that the Hellenistic-Judeo-Christian tradition played a very essential role in constructing this world view. We also have the question of applying such knowledge, technologically, to the needs of human life.

Human spiritual activities have similarly been studied through the same Western patterns of intellectual thought. Aims and methodologies are, naturally, somewhat different; there are much longer traditions to be considered and much wider ranges of various systems than in modern science and technology. But overall, I have the same problem with regard to understanding, if we follow the Western way of thinking only.

Three Basic Questions

I would like to investigate these problems further by raising three questions:
(1) On the relation between the material and the spiritual — or between the visible and the invisible;
(2) On space-time as a field of human existence and activities;
(3) On logic as a tool as well as an element of human existence and activities.

Almost all Western philosophical systems admit that human existence has both a material and a spiritual dimension. They also admit, in principle, the possibility of interaction between material and spiritual entities. The question of the existence, as well as the interaction between material and non-material entities, has been discussed very often. I would only point out recent developments in the natural sciences which have given more occasion for serious discussion of these questions. As an example of recent development there is the scientific cosmology which offers a theory compatible with the spiritual concept of *creatio ex nihilo* — namely the beginning of the universe more than 100 billion years ago by the so-called "big bang" theory.

The Space-Time Framework

With the systematic development of natural science in modern times — and especially that of physics — the framework of space and time has been formulated in a very precise manner. But if we wish to include existence and the interaction between the material and the spiritual within the space-time framework, such a framework is evidently too narrow. A fundamental question is how to extend this framework.

One of the most advanced fundamental physics theory is that of "quantum field theory," which is the combination of quantum theory and relativity. In the theory, material entities are defined as fields as well as particles. This theory, I find, lacks logical consistency — unless we introduce an observer outside the four-dimensional space-time world or framework.

***"Aevum"* — Between Time and Eternity**

The development of modern Western thought has been greatly influenced by the dualistic attitude of Descartes: between the essential activity of the mind — *"Cogito, ergo sum"* (I think, therefore I am.) — and the inertia of the material world. This has made it quite difficult to achieve a unified picture of the material and spiritual worlds.

I find that a concept from medieval scholastic philosophy — the concept of *"aevum"* — is very appropriate to describe the generalized field of space-time. Since *"aevum"* is related only to time, I have proposed a further refinement, that of *"ionity"*, which also includes the space dimension. The concept derives from the Latin, *"aeternum"* — it expresses the notion of a field between time and eternity. This is a field of existence and activities of spiritual entities, spiritual creatures like angels, and heavenly bodies which has been discussed in detail by a number of scholastic philosophers.

Thomas Aquinas even alludes to the possibility of the existence or activities of human souls in *"aevum"* — or as I prefer to call it to more correctly denote space-time, *"ionity."* I think this concept should be studied more exactly. My conjecture is that this will enable us to understand human existence and its activities more deeply — to see the human race as a unique entity among the whole ensemble of created entities. In Oriental thought and literature we can find rich expressions of this concept, under various names.

The Value in "Fuzzy Logic"

In considering the role of logic in this whole analysis, I would like to draw attention to the possible usefulness of the concept of "fuzzy logic," which was first discussed by Dr. Lotfi A. Zadeh and his collaborators in their work in computer programming in system engineering at the University of California at Berkeley.

In formal logic, for example, we might assign certain values to real numbers: say, for example, giving a value 1 for rational and value 0 for irrational. Zadeh proposed considering a set of elements whose characteristic can take any value between 1 and 0. He called this set a "fuzzy" logic set, and any logical system based on such a set was "fuzzy logic."

Granted that clear and distinct definitions are indispensable to a rational way of reasoning; still, one cannot deny that many situations arise when we cannot define a concept in such a clear and distinct way. Even in theoretical physics, we now know, a number of particles of a given macroscopic object cannot be definite. We can find many examples in our daily life where we use fuzzy concepts — like the height of a person, degrees of beauty, etc.

As with the concept of *"aevum"* or *"ionity,"* we find rich examples of this with different names in traditional Oriental thought, in various cultural contexts. What is particularly noteworthy is that the idea originates from the most advanced modern systems engineering. The merit of the idea of "fuzziness," I would argue, is that it is a natural generalization of formal logic, and therefore not difficult for Occidental mentalities, while at the same time familiar to the Oriental way of thinking. It offers a convenient common basis for discussions like the present one.

A crucial question from Catholic theology is related to the spiritual-material connections. It is that of *"sacramenta"* — those occasions where visible material actions, words or gestures (the confession of sins, the ingestion of the Communion wafer, the rites of birth, marriage or death) become the causes for receiving God's grace.

Towards the end of the Catholic Mass, the priest recites the words: "Lord, may we receive in purity of heart what we have taken in the mouth, and may temporal gifts become eternal healing for us." This sentence is one of the most profound declarations of the tangible action of God on human souls, by way of the words and actions of the priest and the faithful. It exemplifies the acceptance of the content of faith as a voluntary, free action of each individual.

The Spiritual Challenge to Science

I believe that our appreciation of humankind as a unique integration of the material and the spiritual can only be possible within these twin concepts of *"ionity"* in space-time and "fuzzy logic."

Together, they constitute a tool for understanding which I call "hidden realism." I take this as the acceptance of a reality which is the ultimate entity of all existence — which I call God. This is an understanding which should be truly independent of one's philosophical or religious convictions, that human being cannot exist without the existence of this "hidden reality." In such a world view, we can find a common basis for the global human society — which I call "communion" — even when "communication" may become impossible. ■

Is Confucianism Part of the Capitalist Ethic?

By Tu Wei-ming

In their frequent examination of the Japanese economic success story, Western observers have wondered whether or not there is a unique East Asian aspect to development wonders — bolstered by the subsequent successes of the so-called "Little Tigers." All of them — Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore — are built on societies founded on Confucianism.

In the following excerpt, from a paper he presented at the International Conference on Culture and Development in Asia and the Pacific in Fukuoka, Japan, in March 1990, which was jointly sponsored by the UNU with the City of Fukuoka, Professor Tu Wei-ming of Harvard University examines the underlying role of Confucianism in the East Asian success story. — **Editor**

In his 1974 Foreign Affairs article on the Sinic World, Edwin Reischauer grouped Japan and the four "mini-dragons" (Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore, Taiwan) together as integral parts of the Confucian cultural universe. The assumptive reason underlying Reischauer's perspective is widely accepted in the Sinological community: the spread of Confucian teaching was so extensive and penetrating in China and peripheral countries like Korea, Vietnam and Japan that, prior to the impact of the West in the mid-19th century, pre-modern Asia could be characterized as the Confucian age.

Specifically, since the 13th century in China, late 14th century in Korea, 15th century in Vietnam, and 17th century in Japan, the cultural elite shared the same moral education and the political leadership appealed to the same ritual system, both defined in Confucian terms. Every educated male adult was socialized in the same scriptural tradition, namely the Four Books with the collected commentaries compiled by Chu Hsi (the basic Confucianist canon), and every statesman employed the symbolic resources from the Confucian tradition for governing the state.

Despite a number of other religious influences, Confucian humanism must be recognized as a common discourse of the Sinic world. More than a century of Western domination has not totally undermined this moral fabric. Without stretching one's imagination, the Confucian discourse remains the "civil religion" of East Asia — including Mainland China, North Korea and Vietnam. By civil religion, I mean the value system that guides ordinary behaviour as well as gives ultimate meaning to life in society.

Post-Confucianism

This relevance of Confucian humanism to the Sinic world notwithstanding, Japan and the four mini-dragons are no longer Confucian. They have been so westernized — or more appropriately "Americanized" — that the presence of the Confucian heritage can no longer be taken for granted. Recognition of this has given rise to what modern-day scholars of the system have taken to calling "post-Confucianism."

The post-Confucian hypothesis is predicated on the assumptions that: culture matters; that values people cherish or unconsciously uphold provide guidance for their actions; that the motivational structure of people is not only relevant, but crucial to their economic ethics; and that the life-orientation of a society makes a difference in the economic behaviour of its people. These assumptions are necessary for making the post-Confucian hypothesis intelligible as an explanatory model.

We must then examine the salient characteristics of the Confucian heritage and the possible bearings they might have on the distinctive features of the East Asian Development model.

"Habits of the Heart"

Inspired by Max Weber's thesis on the Protestant ethic, thrift and industriousness have often been singled out as major Confucian contributions to the modern East Asian work ethic. More elaborate attempts also seek to include family cohesiveness and respect for authority. Peter Berger, for example, includes "a positive attitude to the affairs of this world, a sustained lifestyle of discipline and self-cultivation, respect for authority, frugality, an overriding concern for stable family life."

Nevertheless, I believe it is misleading to approach the Confucian tradition as if its efficacy in modern East Asia could be reduced to disembodied values.... It is one thing to find genuinely creative reconstruction of Confucian philosophy, and quite another to detect the Confucian "habits of the heart" at work.

In what sense, then, has the Confucian tradition survived, after: (1) the total collapse of the imperial order; (2) the fundamental transformation of the agricultural economy; and (3) a profound change in the family-centred social structure?

An image of Confucius with passages from the Analects of Confucius. Rendered by Juro CURUSU. *Japan Quarterly* (January-March 1991).

Since the attack on Confucius at the May Fourth cultural movement in 1919, the demise of Confucianism has been announced time and time again for the last 70 years. The Confucian "habits of the heart," however, survived and continued to flourish. Recently, intellectual historians in mainland China, to their great surprise, have discovered that the New Confucian Humanism, is one of the most sophisticated, vibrant and creative currents of thought in contemporary China.

Intellectuals of all ideological persuasions in the People's Republic of China take it for granted that, for better or worse, the Chinese social ethic as well as the Chinese political culture are inseparably intertwined with the Confucian tradition. But the Chinese intelligentsia's obsession with the Confucian tradition is one-sided. Confucianism is not only historically complex but culturally diverse. It is not exclusively Chinese — for the Confucian tradition is also Korean, Japanese and Vietnamese.

The Individual: A Centre of Relationships

The Confucian insistence that learning is for the sake of the self, and that the self is a centre of relationships, is in sharp contrast to the doctrine of individualism in the modern West. The notion remains a powerful moral force in East Asia. This group orientation — or at least a non-individualistic approach to life — seriously challenges the assumption of Talcott Parsons: that "individualism" (or as he called it, "ego-orientation") is inevitably and intrinsically linked to modernity.

The rise of Japan and the four mini-dragons suggests an alternative path to modernity — a path that raises fundamental questions about the linkage between modernity, capitalism and individualism. It hints at the authentic possibility of a spirit of capitalism rooted in the Confucian ethic. Such an ethic seems to have centred in a location that is much more dynamic than Parsons' lonely self: it is a self that is not an island, but rather an ever-expanding stream of interconnectedness. The ability of East Asian entrepreneurs to take full advantage of human capital — be it through demand to family loyalty, a disciplined work force or supporting staff — is not an accident. They are beneficiaries of the Confucian way of life.

Equally important, but less obvious, is that the East Asian conception of society itself is Confucian in character. The adversary relationship so carefully cultivated in American civil society is relegated to the background. Despite fierce competitiveness which generates a great deal of tension and conflict, East Asian societies are in essence "fiduciary communities" — which is to say they are founded on mutual trust and confidence. They take internal cohesiveness as a precondition for the long-term well-being of the people.

The ability of the leaders in these societies to mobilize resources on a large scale from different sectors testifies to the credibility of the basic Confucian precept: that the public good is not in conflict with private interests and that the enhancement of the wealth of the nation will eventually bring profit to all.

To be sure, the rhetoric of patriotism is so powerful that people are often blinded to the abusive use of power by the elite. But since the Confucians believe that political leaders ought to be moral exemplars as well, any revelation that the leadership is corrupt will lead to a major crisis in legitimacy. Public accountability is, therefore, necessary for political survival. The relative ease with which industrial East Asian governments have transformed themselves into "development states" must be understood in the context of this pattern of interaction between the leaders and the populace, defined in Confucian terms.

Responsibility vs. Duty

The pervasiveness of the rhetoric of duty and the paucity of reference to rights in the public discourse must not lead us to the facile conclusion that respect for authority (or subjugation at the expense of personal dignity) is always one-sided. In the Confucian ethic, the sense of duty is proportionate to the responsibility assumed. The heavier one's responsibility, the more enhanced one's sense of duty.

The Confucian dimension in the East Asian development model, it seems to me, could be summed up in three interrelated areas of concern: (1) the style of political leadership; (2) the pattern of social interaction; and (3) the path of human flourishing. The public demand that political leaders must also act as moral exemplar, and that members of the cultural elite must be socially responsible is characteristic of all Confucian societies. Political power and intellectual influence are thus laden with far-reaching ethical implications.

Path of Human Flourishing

Confucius never created a spiritual sanctuary — a sacred place (a church, a shrine, a synagogue) diametrically opposed to the secular world. Instead, he regarded the secular as sacred. For the Confucians, the world as we know it is the home and we are obligated to make our home a nourishing environment for humanity. The Confucians respect natural hierarchy — such as age differentiation in the family, the importance of status and authority in society, and the necessity of the division of labour in the economic sphere. Historically, however, the Confucian tradition has contributed to gerontocracy, authoritarianism, male domination, anti-commercialism and a host of other patterns of thought and behaviour that are incompatible with the modernizing process.

But this does not mean that an East Asian politician, teacher or merchant under the influence of Confucian-derived values cannot function effectively in a modern society. On the contrary, they may have more spiritual resources to tap into than their counterparts in non-Confucian societies.

The Confucian path to human flourishing, neither a spiritual journey to the other shore nor a salvation in the next life, is rooted in the improvability of this world and this life. While genetically it may not have contributed to the emergence of the spirit of capitalism, it seems in perfect accord with modern consciousness. Certainly the evocation of the Confucian dimension — if for nothing else — gives the intellectual discourse on the East Asian development model a far richer texture. ■

Women's Struggles in the Third World

The articles on these two pages, by Elssy Bonilla and Fatima Mernissi, examine the concept of sexuality in today's developing societies from two very different cultural perspectives: Dr. Bonilla's, from that of Latin America, with its Roman Catholic overtones, Dr. Mernissi's from the Islamic culture of North Africa. Both come down heavily, however, on the strictures of traditional mores. Dr. Bonilla, a Colombian demographer, cites the extent to which rural women in that country feel they are "under the command of the husband" in sexual matters. Dr. Mernissi, a Moroccan sociologist, notes the ways in which sexuality, in the Islamic world, is regulated by masculine codes of honour. Dr. Mernissi has written frequently about the role of women in the Arab World. Her latest book, *Forgotten Sultanas: Female Chiefs of State in Islam*, has been published in 1990. — Editor

Latin America: Perceiving Their Own Lives

By Elssy Bonilla

Dr. Elssy Bonilla is a professor-researcher, Faculty of Economics, Andes University in Bogotá, Colombia, which conducted important segments of the research for the UNU's Household, Gender and Age Project. The following is excerpted from a recently published book, The Demographic Transition and Women's Life-course in Colombia *(UNU Press, 1990). —* **Editor**

Sexuality has been seen, in different studies, as a central aspect of women's subordination. In Latin American culture, female sexuality would appear to take on a more than strictly personal meaning: from that moment at which man's dignity does not depend wholly on his behaviour, but also on that of his companion. Accordingly, in this cultural viewpoint, the honour of the family depends mainly on its women's prudence.

The rural women in our study clearly and constantly expressed a view, which gave men wide scope and liberty in sexual behaviour, while restricting the conduct of women. This is in accordance with ethical and moral norms and is based on tradition and social custom. It does not, we have found, necessarily reflect the individual's thoughts on the subject.

Sexuality, traditionally, has not been a topic of conscious reflection in rural Colombian communities, at least in the Andean area. As a consequence, established social practice becomes the point of reference and legitimizes the appropriate sexual development of all group members.

But a break with these established mores was noted when questions were asked, in our study, about behaviour which ran counter to traditional norms, but which clearly occur to some degree in the rural environment, i.e., premarital sexual relations. This was evident from the life-history data obtained by the study, which indicated a high proportion of single rural women with children. Elements of change were also observed when inquiring about the necessity of educating young people about topics related to sexuality. Thus, an initial and tentative acceptance of the discussion of these issues was perceived, in as much as women could reflect on their own lack of knowledge and on the implications that this lack of knowledge had for their lives.

Sexuality vs. Procreation

Urban women in the younger cohort (25-29 years of age) said that sexual life was not limited to procreation. They pointed out that it was a right acquired by couples and that their companions shared this opinion. Sexuality and procreation, they indicated, are two realities that must be treated independently, without subordinating the first to the second. Among older women — the 45-49 cohort — this division is not clear. Even though some of them think like the younger cohort, the majority consider that to separate sexuality from procreation "is to go against God's will;" but they point out that their husbands do not necessarily share this opinion.

With rural women, among both younger and older cohorts, a clear difference on this question was not observed. In general, the women interviewed were not in agreement with the idea that couples should only have sexual relations when they want to have children. Nevertheless, the rural woman's subordination to the sexual demands of her husband was manifested in expressions such as: "one is under the command of the husband;" "from the time you marry, you are under this obligation;" and "when they want it, you have to give it to them."

Sexually speaking, the wife should be available to "service" her husband, without considering her own interests, which in turn highlights the virtual absence of expressed female pleasure in sexuality. In addition, these statements are affected by the double moral standard of sexual behaviour — explained by these rural women by their references to the "different" nature of men and women. The difference in male power and male perceptions and female submission was reiterated.

The Urban View: "What Is Moral"?

A clear difference by cohort was detected among urban women in the way they conceived sexuality. Older women defined it from a clear moral perspective: to them sexual relations were exclusively for legally married couples. This cohort does not agree with premarital sexual relations because it considers them to be morally improper. But looking more deeply, we find that "moral" has some specific connotations — revealing how culture establishes clear differences between the sexes and places women at a disadvantage to men.

Younger urban women approved single women having sexual relations, but their opinions differed by social status. Those in the upper and middle strata agreed with such relationships because they believe that women have the same rights as men, and because this was a good way of getting to know each other before marriage. From this perspective, these young women appraise sexuality in a positive way, applying equal conditions to males.

Younger women from the lower strata, however, did not identify themselves with equal sexual conditions. For them, premarital sexual relations were conditioned on the use of contraceptives, since they thought that they ran a high risk of being cheated by their companions — and even of being rejected if they got pregnant.

The Rural View: Double Standard Lives

In the rural areas, two-thirds of the women interviewed did not sanction premarital sexual relations. Those disagreeing were mostly from middle and upper levels, and among older women. Although the ethical and moral dimensions were mentioned, in rejecting premarital relations, two other analytical categories assumed importance: social sanctions and distrust of men's motives. On one side is fear of social sanctions, which are exerted particularly towards women; on the other is an element of distrust in men's sincerity: men can "ridicule you," "toss you on the junk pile," or "trick you."

Asked about the equal rights of men and women to engage in premarital relations, a large majority of women said this was not the case; this opinion was unanimous among younger rural women from both lower and middle classes. And few of the older rural women from the upper stratum claimed to support such an idea of equality. In fact, they emphasized the double standard of sexual behaviour, i.e. "the women should be more sensible," "a woman is faithful to one man only," "a women should be careful and control herself."

On the other side, however, men are considered "rovers" or "tom-cats" and "the man has a thousand times more freedom, they're not criticized." The older women who concurred on the possibility of equal rights for men and women in this matter suggested that the same rights should apply to both. "We should have this freedom because we are human beings equal to men. But for us, the women, we are branded for any little thing."

The opinions of women on premarital sexual relations showed that among younger urban women of the upper stratum, a greater change had occurred, in that they also had an independent attitude to sexuality. Younger urban women from the lower stratum also accept premarital relations — but they do not trust their companions because they continue to accept a traditional view of the situation.

Motherhood: Honour or Costly Burden?

Maternity has two meanings in giving women identity. On the one hand, it is the basis of a cult of motherhood; on the other, it suggests that "maternity" implies all the responsibilities inherent in the biological and social reproduction of children, as well as the daily caretaking of husbands and other adult members of the household. Thus defined, motherhood involves a contradiction: it is both an honour and a costly burden. On the altar of maternity, women have sacrificed many aspects of their lives — accepting their exclusion from various social spheres as well as taking on a series of responsibilities with their husbands and children that should actually be shared with other social institutions.

When urban women in our study were asked if the principal mission of a woman was to be a mother, there were different answers from older and younger women, and from upper and lower social levels. Older women from all levels and younger women from the lower strata approved of

Study of Women's Life-course

The Colombian study of women's life-course made use of what social scientists call a "cohort analysis." It surveyed the views of two groups, or "cohorts," of women living in and around Bogotá — one between the ages of 45-49, a second from 25-29 years of age. The older cohort reflected a time of Colombia's population growth, the younger cohort, a period of sharp decrease in fertility — a decrease so dramatic it has been characterized as a "demographic transition without precedent." The UNU study thus focused on the factors that might have caused this extraordinary change in social values.

this idea: it was woman's destiny, a reason for living, following "God's law." The young women of the middle and upper classes, however, tended to disagree. They felt that, while maternity is important, it is not the be all and end all of women's existence. Women, in their view, can "have other aims" — "having children is part of lifebut it is not everything."

Mother Is "Irreplaceable"

In rural areas, the idea of motherhood as women's *raison d'être* is generally accepted without question — with the underlying notion that it is an unavoidable responsibility and that a woman's realization as a person depends on its accomplishment. A woman is incomplete and has not developed as a social being if she has not become a mother. Almost all rural women said that they were irreplaceable as mothers, in the sense of providing physical care and affection for their children. They strongly criticize women who do not undertake this task fully and without reserve — this is true across age groups and social levels.

The study suggests strongly that two aspects continue to determine the way that many Latin American women define their lives: maternity and, in conjunction with it, the role that children play in their lives. At all ages and at all levels, women pointed out to us that the main mission of a woman was to be a mother — although for younger urban women of the middle and upper strata this doesn't prevent them from fulfilling themselves in other ways. Women, they all agree, simly cannot be replaced in the child-rearing process. This means that women who are working outside the home are doing so without any change in the division of work within the household. Thus nearly all women have longer working period than their companions. It is to be hoped that, in the future, the changes in women's modern perception of their lives will be reflected in a true reorganization and redistribution of domestic work. ■

The Arab World: Still the Myth of the Veil?

By Fatima Mernissi

Dr. Mernissi, a member of the UNU governing Council, is a professor at the Institute of Scientific Research at the Université Mohamed V in Rabat, Morocco. The following is excerpted from a translation from the French of her March 1990 report to UNESCO, "Femmes Arabes Horizon 2000." — **Editor**

The Arab World has, like other third world nations, pressing issues, such as environment, demographic problems, technology gaps, social inequalities and political deprivations, unemployment, etc... But one issue which keeps constantly emerging as central, and which polarizes passions and stirs debates, is the veil, a rather trivial clothing item. How can this intriguing power of the veil be explained?

In this article, I want to suggest that the key issue in the Arab World today is democracy, and since democracy is basically the emergence of the individual as a sovereign entity, it means the destruction of Islam as a sexual and political territorial control system, and the veil is the symbol of that territoriality. Islam's control system revolves around the concept of *hudud* (frontier, limit, boundary), which separates space and sexes and organizes them in a fixed hierarchies. The veil, *hijab* in Arabic, signifies, at the same time, the frontier and the law regulating it. The *hijab* signifies the frontier dividing space between the sexes as well as the submission of women (inside) to men (outside); the long robe a woman has to wear is to hide herself when she steps out of her allocated territory.

But besides the sexual frontier, there is a political one, the "*hijab* of the khalif," which separates the leader from the masses, as basically violent and subversive crowds, and submits them to *amma*, meaning leader's sacred will. Finally, the last frontier, the international one, separates the territory of peace, the House of Islam, from the territory of war, the rest of the world. Islam's supremacy over the outside explains *jihad*, the holly war, constant alertness to protect the culture from external infiltration. Democracy means the collapse of the three frontiers, the sexual (equality between the sexes), the political (the leader has to be elected by the masses) and, finally, the international (media and technological invasion). But we will grasp the fears of Muslims today from democracy as essential boundaries erasing phenomenon if we concentrate on sexuality.

Broadly speaking, human societies seem to have found two modalities to enforce public order in the field of sexuality: external control or internal control. In traditional societies — in Muslim communities, for example — sexuality is controlled through external pressure exercised by the group according to a code of honour. If a man lays hands on a woman, he will be punished by another man, either her father, brother or husband. Social control is external to the individual's willpower. In modern societies of Europe or North America, sexuality is controlled through an internal process governed by the personal responsibility of individuals of both sexes.

The two control systems are so far apart that they lead to a widely divergent concepts of the individual. In Western secular societies, the sexual sphere is managed by a philosophy of personal responsibility in both the sexual and political sphere. The personal willpower of men (and women) is sufficiently developed to allow them to assume responsibility for their actions. The Western individual controls his or her own sexual drive and requires neither community control nor gender segregation to master his or her "animal yearning for fornication." He or she exercises the same responsibility for his or her political actions — since the individual possesses a sovereign decision-making power that he or she may delegate to an elected representative.

Man Cannot Manage Himself

Islam operates on the principle that man is neither sexually nor politically responsible, precisely because man is defined as incapable of managing himself. Therefore, man's actions need to be externally directed in both the sexual and political spheres. In the political sphere, man obeys the *imam* or *khaleef*, while in the sexual sphere gender segregation and community pressure ensure the maintenance of order as the expression of a transcendental and divine will. Such order can only be maintained if women are not mobile and are limited to the harem.

Wide World Photos

Democracy = Sexual Confusion

This explains why Islamists and their *imams* and sheiks are thoroughly convinced that Western societies are living in total promiscuity and absolute confusion. Algerian fundamentalist leader Ali Ben Haj equates democracy with sexual confusion and is convinced that the English are incestuous, while homosexuality is not limited to a minority. He says: "Democracy is a concept of alien origin.... It postulates popular rather than divine sovereignty.... Today in England, democracy gives man the right to marry another man, and even to marry his own sister provided she is at least 21 years of age. Is that the meaning of civil liberties?"

Because they do not enforce order in the sexual sphere through community control and do not put women under the protection of men, Western societies — so claim the Islamic fundamentalists — are doomed to live in bestiality. In the tribal concept of honour, it is not conceivable that an individual is capable of self-control and self-management. If the individual is left to himself or herself, society would be destroyed, since the individual, this view holds, has no sense of responsibility. The anguish felt by fundamentalists when confronted with modernism, as well as their skepticism when faced by a Muslim world where unveiled women mix freely with men, can only be understood by recognizing the significance of the *hudud* or the *hijab* as the sole boundaries capable of ensuring the maintenance of social order.

Differing Concepts of the Individual

The Moroccan philosopher Ali Oumlil suggests that Islam and secular concepts of individual have no similarity; each society refers to a different vision, a different philosophy of man. The problem is that modern Muslim states have borrowed Western institutions — such as parliament and voting — which are based on concepts of sovereign individual, entirely opposed to Islamic philosophy.

He goes on to say that the concept of *fitra* (nature) in the Islamic Arab mind is entirely different from the concept this word carries in classical Western liberal thought. According to him, Arab States have incorporated into their political systems such institutions and procedures as universal suffrage, parliaments, political parties, trade unions, etc., without having properly understood and assimilated their philosophical content — which is diametrically opposed to the tenets of Islam.

Abolishing the *hijab*, letting women out of the harem, would expose men to *fitna* (chaos); just as giving the masses right to expression will endanger the political leaders' legitimacy. Without social and material *hudud* (boundaries), man would be incapable of resisting his instinctive drives and the masses would become dişorderly.

Significantly, however, some important Muslim religious voices have developed an interpretation of Islam where man is capable of responsibility, and that, therefore, the *hijab* and the confinement of women are really minor issues devoid of any central significance. Chari'ati of Iran, for example, argues that wearing the veil may have been justified in ancient times, but that Islamic society has undergone changes that now make this practice obsolete.... Tunisia's Tahar Haddad, in his book, *Women between Shari'a and Society*, asks:

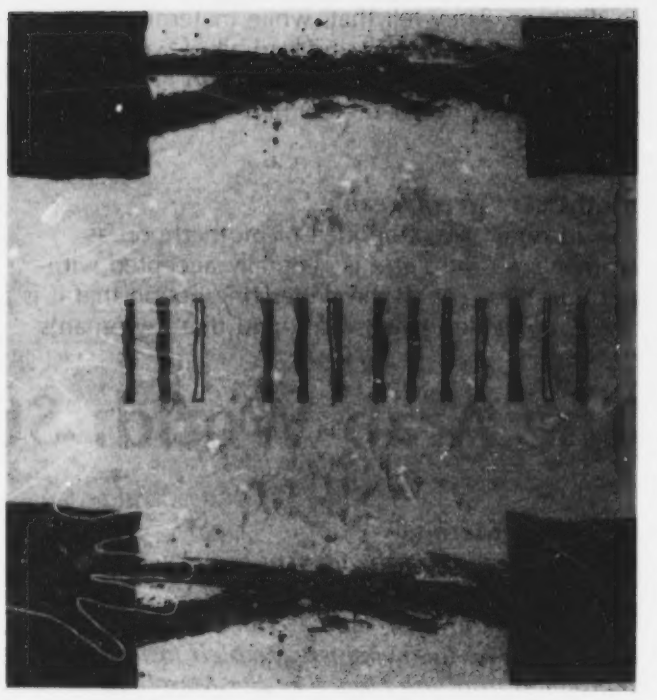
> "What would happen if we were to present future generations with a rigid, immutable concept of Islam that would take no account of the changing of the times? ... Is it true that Islam has preached equality between all beings without any other distinction but their actions? The answers to such questions are undoubtedly clear in the mind of those who have sufficiently reflected, upon the precepts of Islam."

However great the intellectual impact of such Islamic thinkers, they have not yet mobilized the masses to their cause. The fundamentalist sheiks — who did succeed in this mobilization — strongly believe that the boundaries of sexual segregation, and of course the political boundaries which submit the group to the leader are the only ways to maintain moral order.

The Veil as Mythical Symbol

The intriguing power of the veil stems, therefore, from its symbolical dimension as a sign of the frontier. Failing to understand this would make it exceedingly difficult to appreciate the political dynamics of the Arab World, and, therefore, that of the Mediterranean all together. Without such understanding, the psychological factors that may determine the future of Arab women may well be underestimated — and lead to the failure of any strategy promoting democracy in that region of the world. The veil is also the symbol of the barrier insulating Islam against the all-powerful West and its arrogant and aggressive technological culture. ■

Culture's Essential Role in Development



By S.C. Dube

While conceding the obvious benefits of science and technology, the author argues that these have been frequently part of an espousal of a materialistic ideology of "economism." This has tended to ignore and stifle those rich cultural diversities and resources in the non-Western world, which are now recognized as essential to the development process. S. C. Dube states that in efforts to improve understanding of the world's cultural differences — differences which have led to so much of the planet's conflict and bloodshed — we need to find new ways to meld the global dictates of technological advance with these deeper cultural roots. Dr. Dube's presentation is taken from his paper, "Cultural Dimensions of Development," presented at the UNU-sponsored International Conference on Culture and Development in Asia and the Pacific in Fukuoka, Japan, in March 1990. Dr. Dube, a sociologist, is the former Director of the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies. — **Editor**

In December 1987, I had the privilege of chairing an international meeting of social scientists at UNESCO in Paris — which considered the same basic question which occupies us here today: the cultural dimensions of development. But who, in 1987, could have forecast that the Berlin Wall, that monument to human folly, would be pulled down so soon and so easily? Who would have dared to predict the dramatic opening of the Second World — the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe? With disbelief and awe we have been watching momentous changes whose possible impact on humankind cannot be overestimated. At first glance, what has happened may seem to be a step in the right direction — at least in so far as it offers a chance of global peace. The many tangled problems that we have inherited cannot be solved only by the magic of *glasnost* and *perestroika*. The local irritants and regional tensions that persist are many and varied, and they need to be penetratingly studied and patiently attended to. A major effort is necessary to eradicate the tenacious prejudices that distort cultural and national perspectives and lead to conflicts.

Human survival depends on peace, but the absence of war is only one aspect of peace. The destruction of arsenals is necessary; but we cannot forget that hunger and disease have been greater killers than wars. Humankind cannot experience true peace so long as degradation and destitution, exclusion and exploitation persist. The struggle for survival will also have to focus attention on these issues. Platitudes, rhetoric, and half-hearted measures have so far made no dent in them.

A significant part of the discourse on development has taken place within the frames of reference of economism and culturalism. These two perspectives have adopted: (1) different images of humankind and society; (2) different sets of cultural orientations; and (3) different visions of the future. Homo Economus Economism is informed and inspired, sometimes implicitly, by the utilitarian principle of avoidance of pain and maximization of pleasure. It has emphasized the enhancement of production through the use of constantly advancing science and technology, aiming at a greater availability of consumption goods. In a way, happiness has been equated with wealth and with all that wealth can bring.

In this image, humankind must ceaselessly strive to increase its domination over nature, by discovering and inventing new ways of extracting worldly goods from it. Society must be organized along functional roles and specializations — even if, in the process, its members are reduced almost to ants and bees. The logic of rationality has made severe demands, to which society has had to yield. The industrialization imperative has shown little concern for cultural differences; they were destined to be obliterated as societies inexorably moved towards modernity. Western modernization has provided the model, and non-Western societies have had either to join the mainstream or to languish and eventually fade out.

Culturalism, on the other hand, recognizes the specificities of situations and contexts of development. It envisioned alternative paths towards the attainment of developmental goals. Communities and societies are not without options: they should be under no compulsion to adopt a model not suited to their ethos, world views and values. This approach recognizes the centrality of culture and accepts the possible positive role of tradition. Cultural particularities are not considered necessarily inimical to development; in fact, the void created by the erosion of culture is seen as counter-productive to development aims. Different segments of humankind, it is argued, should be free to articulate themselves through their historically derived designs of living — i.e. their culture.

Most critics of modernization and development based on economism are not against wealth or science and technology. They are bothered rather by questions of distribution and utilization. In the contemporary world scenario, a number of people see something obscene in the abject poverty of the many and the overflowing prosperity of the few. It is against this backdrop that we should try to understand the sudden appearance of culture over the horizon of development. It would be unwise to write off culturalism as reactionary and negative, for it has a rationale that compels reflection.

First and foremost, many have a fear of cultural erosion and loss of identity. This fear is based on the stated or unstated assumption that all cultural differences will eventually be obliterated as humankind moves towards the Western ideal of development. Culture is a part of individual and collective being: it cannot be discarded like a worn garment. Cultures do change over time, but attempts to impose completely new ones from outside have been and being resisted — as indeed they must be.

Stereotypes are rarely accurate; they should always be treated with caution. The stereotypical opposition of "Spiritual East vs. Materialistic West" was as wrong as is the currently popular one: "Traditional Asia vs. Modern Europe." Culture represents centuries-old ways of coping with problems and situations. This heritage should not be rejected outright. Not everything that is new is necessarily good; not everything that is old is necessarily bad.

Acupuncture, a traditional Chinese form of healing, is gaining world-wide acceptance. Ginseng, first used in Korea, is now widely sought as an invigorating tonic. Derived from the Indian Ayurvedic system of medicine, *sarpaqandha* (*Rauwolfia Serpentina*) is an effective treatment for hypertension. *Guggul*, a plant gum is extensively used in the treatment of arthritis; and a recent formulation based on old texts — *Amrit Kalash* or pot of ambrosia — has, in its first round of trials, raised great hopes for the treatment of cancer.

Preventive treatments for gout and diabetes that originated in parts of Africa have now found a place in the standard pharmacopoeia. Some of these medicines are claimed not to produce any harmful reactions and side-effects. The World Health Organization now recommends greater use of indigenous systems of treatment together with modern medicine. It is argued by WHO that this combination is likely to have a wider reach and to be more cost-effective than Western medicine alone has been. These stray examples from the field of medicine suggest that much is still to be gained from traditional wisdom — which can be tapped also to solve problems in other areas of life.

Some development programmes meet with disapproval because the people for whom they are intended perceive disadvantages in them. This may be so because of failures in communication, clashes with core values, or a proneness to cause structural dislocations. The management of change becomes difficult when hasty steps are taken in sensitive areas without enough thought having been given to the reactions they are likely to produce.

In the third world, there has been a tendency to impose unwanted reforms and developmental innovations from above. The people have neither any opportunity to evaluate them in their own cultural frame of reference nor a voice in decisions regarding them. Such impositions may be gingerly accepted because compliance is necessary or advisable, but culture is what determines the ultimate outcome.

If development is to be related to basic needs and to quality of life, cultural definitions and valuations acquire an added importance. Without reference to culture, it is impossible to make an inventory of basic needs or to determine the contours of quality of life. The importance of culture in the development process is thus undeniable — it seems to me — but we should not allow runaway enthusiasm to make us lose sight of the limitations and dangers of culturalism.

Some of the criteria that have been used to define autonomous cultural units are race, religion, language and shared heritage. As to the first of these supposed criteria, the various historical experiences in the 20th century with the notion of "pure races" — most notable perhaps in Nazi Germany — should quickly dismiss the arrant nonsense in any race-culture argument.

Nor is religion any better indicator of cultural purity. What do Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Pakistan and Indonesia have in common except Islam — the religion of their majorities? Some of the most destructive wars in history have been fought between nations professing the Christian faith; (in the 20th century, the First World War and the sectarian bloodletting in Northern Ireland are obvious examples). Nor has the sword of Islam only been raised against the infidel; Islamic countries have also fought with one another.

Language is even less reliable. There are major language families, distinct languages, dialects, and even variants of dialects. Which level should be recognized as the base for constituting a cultural unit? No one seems to have any acceptable rational answer. The question of common heritage is still more baffling. Who originated what? This is almost impossible to determine: the fact of widespread cultural borrowing and diffusion is obvious. In an amusing passage in his book, *Tree of Culture* (published in 1955), Ralph Linton described an imaginary person who took pride in being "one hundred per cent American." But in his daily life (already a generation ago!), this man used items that had originated in cultures spread across more than half the globe.

Development poses a number of moral dilemmas. Can it take the stand — which some call ethical neutrality — that inequity and injustice find their sanction in culture? Consider, for instance, the burning of widows and the practice of untouchability, which have continued to exist in my own society. Must the presumed primacy of culture prevail? Or should development take sides? Same moral dilemmas obtain in many other aspects of the development process — which have at times resulted, for example, in racial discrimination, denial of human rights, and even what only could be called genocidal practices. In such instances, should development lend its support to movements of reform, dissent, and protest?

The contemporary world is composed of states and societies that are at once independent and interdependent. Patterns of interdependence have grown and will continue to grow. The many problems that are global in scope will need co-ordinated global handling and global interventions. This calls for mutual understanding and co-operation between states and among cultures. But equally important, I believe finally, is the need for a determined effort to conserve the high achievements of all our civilizations — which are part of the common heritage of humankind. ■

Neither East nor West...

By Susantha Goonatilake

Formal academic study of the role of culture really began with the birth of the social sciences in late 18th century Europe. It has been subject, from the beginning, to the perspectives and experiences — if you will, the cultures — of those who assisted at the birth. This Eurocentrism, asserts Susantha Goonatilake, has not particularly helped our understanding of non-European cultures. But nor are attempts to put the Confucian ethos behind recent development successes in Asia much better in explaining links between culture and development. A far richer and more subtle research scenario is required. The following excerpt is taken from the paper he presented at the International Conference on Culture and Development in Asia and the Pacific, organized by UNU in Fukuoka, Japan, in March 1990. Dr. Goonatilake, who is currently Visiting Research Fellow at the Institute of Developing Economies in Tokyo, Japan, is the Director, Research, People's Bank in Sri Lanka. — **Editor**

The social sciences developed in Europe, during the late 18th and 19th centuries, because of the need to make sense of the major transformations then occurring on that continent. European society was being rapidly transformed, and there was a need to understand this — particularly in comparison to the Europe of yesteryear, as well as contemporary non-European societies.

This need gave rise to a very particular social science vision of other societies. From that ethnocentric viewpoint of that particular time and place, social science disciplines developed — most of them only a necessary adjunct to the economic, political and social changes then occurring in Europe. With such outlook, the "scientific" studies of non-European peoples became locked — "congealed" is really not too strong a word — into such subjects as Sinology, Indology and anthropology. The perspectives that such new disciplines engrained, and the selective data presented, became part of the raw material from which the role of culture in development was conceptualized.

It has been noted that anthropology — concerned with non-European, "simpler" societies — tended to reflect the Victorian sense of superiority of 19th century Europe, and that it was entirely and conveniently consistent with the colonial expansions of that period. Theories of anthropology were formulated from the point of view of Western ideologies, Western needs and Western life styles. In the long perspective, therefore, there was no special "objectivity" in these studies — they were made up of selective facts and explanatory systems developed in order to understand and contain those whom European colonial powers were now dominating.

"Us" vs. "Them" Scholarship

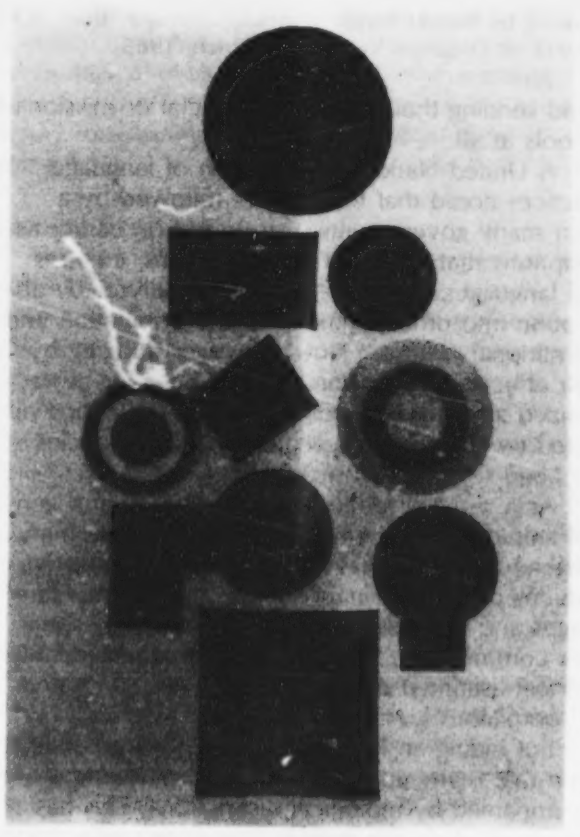
An intellectual division between "us" — Europe, the West — and "them" — the non-West — came to pervade most such studies. Special academic departments of "Oriental Studies" and "Oriental Writings" were established, and provided much of the fodder for conceptualizing non-Western high civilizations in the 19th and 20th centuries. These studies and writings were, as Edward Said has brilliantly put it*, an essential adjunct to domination.

Orientalism, Said said, was in effect a Western way of dominating, restructuring and exercising authority over the Orient. In the disciplines that developed out of Western study of the Orient, there were often underlying assumptions of racial and other inferiorities of the subject peoples. These subsequently crept into the theories of culture and social development, thus limiting their validity.

One can discern two major strands in the dominant Western conceptualizations of culture and development — as defined by two of its classical writers, Marx and Weber. In the Marxist formulation, culture is a derived aspect, part of the superstructure of production relations. According to Weber, however, culture is central to social transformation — not derived but inherent in the process. In Weber's perspective, the key capitalist transformation was due to the religious orientations of Protestant Europe. Weber then proceeded to explore other religious traditions — particularly those of Buddhism, Hinduism and Confucianism — and sought to demonstrate why similar capitalist transformations did not take place within the cultural regions of these religions.

After the independence of many, hitherto colonized lands after World War II, a fresh interest arose in the mechanics of social transformation. There was a new market for development theory — and much of it took place under the hegemonic umbrella of the American scholarship of the day.

These theories tended to see culture and attitudinal change as keys to social transformation and development — as evidenced, for example, in the writings of McLelland and Parsons. Many of these, strongly influenced by the writings of Weber, emphasized the unique cultural features essential for development. But implicit in some of these writings was the assumption that many Asian societies were not capable of major change because of their internalized belief systems — as, for example, the "otherworldliness" of many of their religious beliefs.



End of the "White Man's Burden"

The 1950s and 1960s were, of course, the years of independence for many previously colonized peoples. They proved also to be a time of re-examination of European writings on these societies. Particularly strong criticism was directed at the discipline of anthropology, which had mainly been the study of "primitive" man by the ruling European culture. The notion of the "white man's burden" was emphatically rejected in the new sociological studies.

The same sort of criticism also soon spread to European writings about their "high civilization." Edward Said and others began to point out new sorts of relationships and patterns which had historically obtained between the West and elsewhere. Still other scholars began to question those interpretations by European historians which gave vital centrality to Europe's Greek heritage at the expense of African contributions. Revisionist historians of science meanwhile began similar exercises about South and East Asia — notably, for example, in the monumental scholarship of Joseph Needham on Chinese science and technology. Other critiques emanating from the third world writers (for example, the writings of the African black rejectionists of European culture) further challenged the once established European views about culture and development.

Re-enter the Cultural Dragon: Japan and the NIEs

The last several decades have witnessed a renewed interest in the role of culture in the rapid economic growth in East and South-East Asia. This growth has been led, of course, by Japan which is now the second largest economy in the world. Following in the Japanese footsteps were the so-called NIEs (Newly Industrialized Economies): Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong. It appears that these will soon be joined by the ASEAN countries, with Thailand already in the vanguard.

In explaining the phenomenal development of Japan and the original NIEs, the potential central role of Confucianism has intrigued many development scholars. It has been implied that Confucian values of group solidarity and hard work have been a major, if not main, contributing factor to the development of these countries.

There are, however, some difficulties in these theories. First, although all of the present NIEs come from areas with a Confucian tradition, they have many historical strands which are not common. To start, they have had different experiences with authoritarianism. Korea and Taiwan, for example, have probably been under the most authoritarian regimes during their current period of growth. Japan, on the other hand, functions on a highly internalized authoritarian ethic, stemming from its earlier historical experience — which in modern times stresses "harmonious development."

A larger collective ethos probably existed widely only in the case of Japan, where still today the large-scale firm with life-time employment exists. This type of large-scale enterprise, with an internalized family, was not prominent in the case of Hong Kong — where a more basic capitalistic ethos, with an Adam Smith sense of intense competition among small enterprises, has generally prevailed.

A more important objection to the Confucian ethos as an explanation of the development of these Asian economies is that — unlike Weber's Protestant ethic — there was no equivalent change of value systems in these countries prior to their crucial social transformations. The Confucian ethos existed in these countries and was not reinterpreted, in the manner in which Christian dogma, according to Weber, was reinterpreted by Protestant thinkers in the years before the onset of the European capitalist transformation.

The nearest example one could think of is in Tokugawa Japan where there clearly was emphasis on the Confucian ethos. In the case of the other East Asian countries which industrialized after World War II, however, there was hardly any comparable discussion which spilled over significantly into development policy.

The Individual, Society and History

Thus we could fault the linkages between culture and development both in the Protestant and the Confucian ethic. Neither takes properly into account fundamental cultural and structural aspects of development. Is there a method of reformulating the problem to deal with this lacking?

A promising approach, I believe, is emerging from a renewed interest in social psychology. It concerns itself both with the workings of the human mind and social position of an individual — and relationships between the two. In the intellectual revival underway here, the writings, for example, of the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget (famous for his studies of the development of knowledge in children) are being reinterpreted to show that they had, in fact, not ignored the social and historical dimension in the development of individual knowledge.

Essentially, this new approach takes the view that culture is transmitted from generation to generation down a human chain set up by a historically derived social structure. Culture is the means by which human beings deal with their human and physical environment. Thus social structures change through time and rearrange themselves according to changes in the environment.

Such a formulation of social change, I believe, takes into account more meaningfully the mechanics of actual social transformation and the interactions with culture than the simpler schemes evolved in 19th and early 20th century Europe to describe what was then but a unique transformation in Europe. It also allows for explanation of change in post-industrial societies — which, according to many commentators, have social and attitudinal characteristics quite different from those associated with either the Protestant ethic or a Confucian one. ■

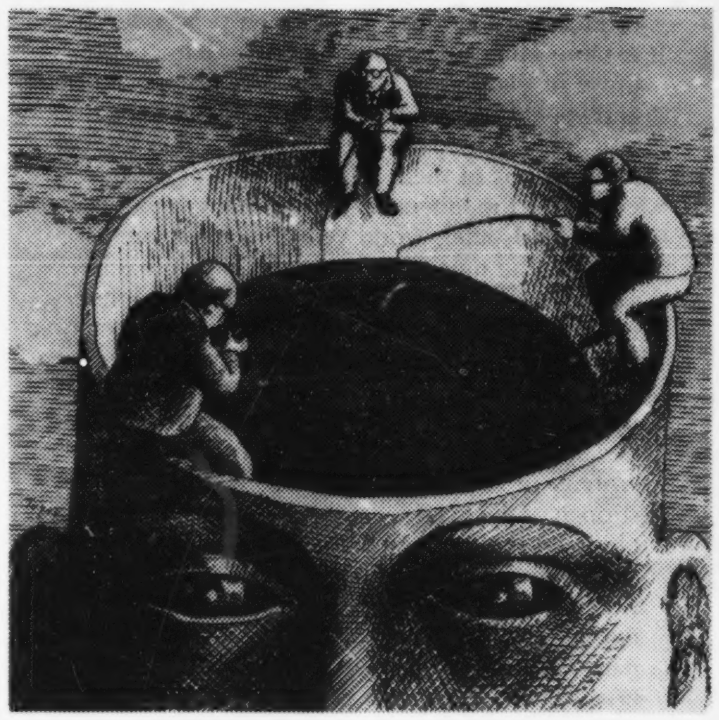
* Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (Random House, New York, USA, 1978).

Language and Social Identity

By Rodolfo Stavenhagen

Language is one of the chief identifiers of the world's so-called "indigenous peoples," those descended from the original people on the land, who are frequently swallowed up by the dominant majority values and culture of the existing state in which they live.

The following examination of the importance of language to indigenous peoples is excerpted from a paper presented by Dr. Stavenhagen at a 1989 Geneva seminar organized by the United Nations Centre for Human Rights. The co-ordinator of the UNU project on ethnic minorities and human and social development, Professor Stavenhagen is on the faculty of El Colegio de México. — **Editor**



Drawing by Roland Topor "Meinungsumfrage" from *TOD UND TEUFEL*, © Diogenes Verlag AG, Zürich, 1985.

Languages shape culture and society in many important ways. They are, for example, the vehicles for literary and poetic expressions, the instruments whereby oral history, myths and beliefs are shared by a community, and transmitted from generation to generation. Just as an Indian without land is a dead Indian (as the World Council of Indigenous Peoples states), so also an ethnic community without a language is a dying community. This was well understood by the romantic nationalists of the 19th and 20th centuries who strove for a revival of "national" languages as part of the politics of nationalism.

On the other hand, language has always been an instrument of conquest and empire. Nebrija, a 15th century Castillian grammarian and adviser to Queen Isabella I of Spain, published his Spanish grammar the same year Columbus reached America, and he advised his queen to use the language as an instrument for the good government of the empire. Both the Spanish Crown and the Church took the advice to heart — and Spanish became one of the universal languages of the modern world. So did English, of course, for the British Empire knew well the power of the word as an instrument of world power.

In the process of colonization, the languages of the colonized peoples — especially if unwritten — were usually downgraded to mere "dialects," a term which connotes something less than a full-fledged structured language, and therefore casts doubt on the status of the culture which uses it. Thus indigenous and tribal peoples are still widely considered today to speak only dialects and not languages — a position frequently shared by government bureaucrats.

This is, of course, linguistic nonsense, but it carries a political message. As some anonymous wit has expressed it: a language is a dialect with an army. Or, to put it in another way, a dominant group is able to impose its language on subordinate groups. Linguistic dominance is more often than not an expression of political and economic domination. To be sure, there are exceptions: in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean, there are a number of *linguae francae*, vehicular languages used for trade and commerce which do not necessarily denote political domination.

In the predominant statist view, stressing national unity, assimilation and development, the languages of indigenous and tribal peoples have usually been destined to disappear. Government policies have generally been designed to help this process along. In most countries, indigenous languages are not given legal recognition, are not used in official administrative and judicial dealings, and are not taught in schools. The people who do use them are discriminated against and treated by the non-indigenous as outsiders, foreigners, barbarians, primitives, and so on.

Very often, the men of a tribe or indigenous community, who move around in the outside world for economic reasons, learn the official or national language of a country and become bilingual. Women tend to be more monolingual, which increases their isolation and the discrimination which they suffer. Small children, before school age, speak the maternal language — but often, as soon as they start school, are not allowed to speak it in class. Observers have noted that this can create serious psychological and learning problems among the school-age children of many indigenous and tribal peoples. Indeed because of language and other forms of discrimination, families sometimes avoid sending their children to official or missionary schools at all.

A United Nations examination of language practices noted that the policies followed by a great many governments were based on earlier assumptions that "indigenous populations, cultures and languages would disappear naturally or by absorption into other segments of the population and the national culture." Now, however, judging by their effects, such policies are beginning to be recognized as not well-grounded; public schooling directed toward the achievement of these policies has been severely questioned.

As a result of policies of persecution and general attitudes of discrimination against them, many indigenous peoples have internalized the negative attitudes of the dominant society against their languages and cultures. Particularly when they leave their communities, they tend to deny their identity and feel ashamed of being "aboriginal, or "native" or "primitive."

But hiding an identity is not always possible, given that many ethnic and cultural differences are accompanied by biological distinctions. This has been particularly the case in European settler societies where the biological differences between the upper classes and the indigenous populations are particularly visible. It is less so in societies which have undergone a process of racial intermarriage and mixing, as in many Asian and Latin American countries.

In recent years, indigenous and tribal peoples have begun to resist the forced disappearance of their languages and cultures. And there has been a slow but growing awareness among social scientists, humanists, educators and even politicians that the maintenance of indigenous languages within the concept of cultural pluralism is not necessarily undesirable for a given country.

One of the questions being debated currently among linguistic specialists is whether language rights should be considered human rights. Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights establishes that persons belonging to ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities shall not be denied the right to use their own language. However, organizations of indigenous peoples around the world refuse to be categorized among "ethnic minorities." This is one of the reasons why a specific declaration of indigenous rights is being prepared in the specialized UN bodies.

Language rights certainly seem to be a major issue among indigenous organizations. At the regional level, for example, periodic inter-American indigenist congresses (which are affiliated with the Organization of American States) have reaffirmed for several years the linguistic rights of the indigenous populations in the Western Hemisphere. UNESCO has also underlined the importance of the use of vernacular languages as an integral part of the cultural policies of states, particularly as regards education for minority groups. A number of countries have recently changed their traditional postures of discrimination against, and the neglect of, indigenous and tribal minority languages, and have designed policies to protect and promote these languages.

In a number of countries, indigenous organizations — and sometimes sympathetic governments — are experimenting with new linguistic and educational policies which take indigenous claims into account. In order to teach the vernacular language, however, many unwritten indigenous languages have had to be turned into written tongues. Alphabets have had to be prepared; educational materials in the vernacular have had to be provided, and teachers have had to be trained.

But this can be a lengthy and complicated process, and among educators and government officials the debates continue as to the relative merits of one or another kind of educational system — monolingual or multilingual. In countries where there exist myriad small indigenous linguistic groups, governments argue that such educational innovations are costly and basically inefficient. In addition, it is often feared that fragmenting the educational systems along linguistic lines is a potential threat to national unity. In these countries, if a majority national language exists, government policy tends to favour teaching only the national or official language.

In other countries, where the indigenous communities are large — and particularly if they have a certain amount of political clout — the eduction in indigenous languages is more likely to become accepted. In most countries where indigenous language schooling is taking root, bilingual education tends to be the norm. The indigenous language is taught together with the official or national language.

Just what the pedagogical mix between the various languages is depends on local conditions. Some authors consider formal schooling in an indigenous language as merely a step towards the appropriation of the official or national language. Others consider it as an end in itself — which is what the indigenous peoples themselves claim. In most countries, the teaching of an indigenous language is carried out only at the lower levels of elementary schooling. In others it also covers up through secondary levels and higher technical schools.

A linked, but much more complicated, educational problem is making bilingual schooling truly bicultural or intercultural. School children in an urban industrial environment formally learn about their own larger "national" culture. Children in indigenous schools must take the reverse path: learning about their own particular cultures and identities, along with what they are taught about their "total society." This poses a formidable task for educational planners as to curriculum development, preparation of textbooks, reading and audio-visual materials, and so forth.

Indigenous peoples have been claiming the right to establish and control their own educational institutions, which means exercising control over their own curriculum, and educational contents. In some countries this is being achieved, and, in many areas, interesting educational experiments are taking place. In other countries — and particularly in the poorer third world countries — this must be the government's responsibility. But, as I have noted, governments are not always eager to undertake such innovation, particularly because they have been identified so long with assimilationist approaches.

The individual human rights spelled out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are now, forty years after their proclamation, generally accepted as international **customary** law. Obviously, indigenous peoples enjoy these same rights. There is a growing consensus, however, that the various international human rights instruments are not enough to guarantee the survival and protection of indigenous peoples around the world — particularly in the face of accelerated economic, social and cultural change. Thus the need for the definition of **collective** economic, social and cultural human rights is now becoming increasingly recognized. ■

Eddi Ploman
An Illuminator of Global Learning, Global Values

In his obituary of Edward Ploman for The Independent *of London, John Howkins observed that "nobody working in international communications research in the 1970s and 1980s was untouched by Eddi Ploman. His greatest achievement (and certainly the most important to himself) is that so many people got caught up in his vision. He was a lighthouse illuminating everyone's voyage, be they politicians, broadcasters, lawyers, artists or students, who was trying to make sense of communications." Mr. Ploman, Vice-Rector of the Global Learning Division of the United Nations University from 1982-86, died on 1 August 1990 at age 64.*

As John Howkins said, he illuminated particularly the work he organized in the area of complexity theory (with Nobel Laureate Ilya Prigogine and others). As the name suggests, it was indeed complex — encompassing as it did everything from the validity of quantum physics to the feeding habits of North Atlantic fish — but Eddi made it enormously intellectually challenging and interesting.

But beyond that Eddi Ploman was warm, witty, courteous, and always responsive to others' needs, at any level. Since global learning (with all its implications for human values) was such an important part of his UNU work, it seems appropriate here to publish an excerpt from his last work on that topic, from a chapter he wrote for the International Law and Global Change *volume, now under preparation, which is edited by Prof. Edith Brown Weiss.*
— Editor

By Edward W. Ploman

Global learning represents one response to what appears as a crucial feature of the situation which faces humanity today — global change. Change is sweeping through all areas of human life. As never before are all regions affected simultaneously and as never before have human activities had such long-range and potentially irreversible effects.

The expression "global learning" may be of recent origin, but there are precursors of the concept — discernible strands of influence in an evolving web of ideas and practices. One such strand reflects reactions to current crises of education everywhere in the world. It is increasingly recognized that conventional systems of education can no longer absorb the range of knowledge now being generated nor disseminate it in the usual educational time-span. Conventional education cannot respond to the demands for equitable, timely and widespread access to knowledge and information or to the learning needs caused by the rapid outdating of knowledge. New modes for learning and knowledge sharing are required — at all levels of society and using all available services and techniques.

Another strand draws upon the recognition of learning as a more basic, more inclusive — and to some more exciting — intellectual discipline than education. This perspective has provided a new focus on the social, political and cultural implications of learning, as well as its socio-cultural roots.

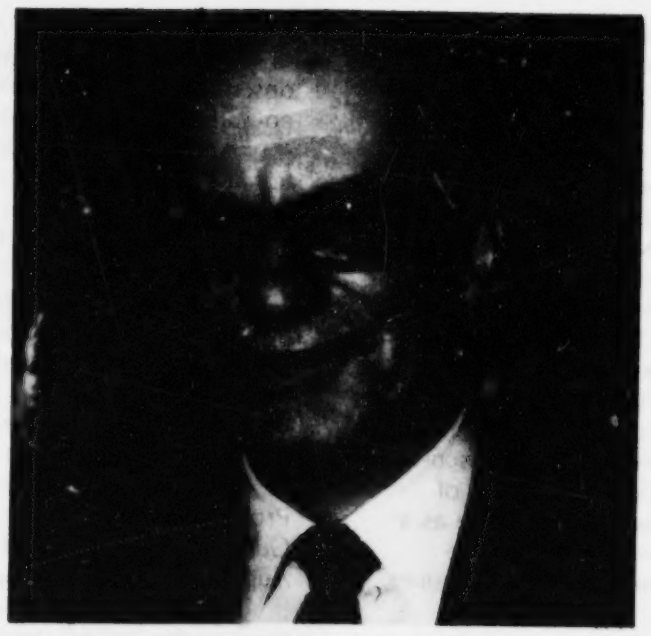
These new approaches to learning have been based, generally, on two key concepts: (1) participatory learning at all social levels, creating solidarity in space; and (2) anticipatory learning, the enhanced capacity to face new, often unprecedented situations, thereby promoting solidarity in time.

Old Learning Goals Challenged

The importance of the new approaches can best be appreciated when seen against older, established concepts. At least in the West, learning was traditionally conceived in narrow, anthropocentric terms: (1) the learning capacity of the human species in contrast to animals and other "lower" forms of being; and (2) the learning capacity of human individuals.

The new scientific and cultural approaches have gone beyond these facile and self-serving assumptions. Not only has learning proven to be an inherent characteristic of all animal behaviour. Concepts such as information transfer and learning are, in advanced scientific theory, being applied generally to open systems, from cells to computers.

In this perspective, learning emerges in what



appears as a striking feature of evolutionary history. The operation of phylogenesis (the natural evolutionary process) improved organic adaptability to the level of generating learning organisms. Biological organisms function as learning systems and biological evolution as a stochastic learning process — that is to say, a random one, but scientifically measurable in terms of mathematical probabilities.

Learning Becomes Socialized

In the human species, the learning process has reached another level at which learning largely becomes socialized — and is therefore no longer purely random or stochastic; it is a conscious and goal-oriented process. In the socialized process, learning takes places both at the level of the individual and at the level of groups and other social entities. It is thus both the socialized learning of individuals (i.e. recognition by an individual of one's responsibilities to a society) and the learning ability of the whole (i.e. society's responsibility to the individual).

The Lens of the Anthropologist

From this perspective, anthropology takes on particular interest. Anthropology has always been concerned with a wide approach to learning: since all culture is learned, culture has a learning dimension and can well be conceived as a learning process. The link to cultural and socio-economic development becomes clearer. The goal of development is a change of attitudes and behaviour and, consequently, development can fruitfully be approached as a learning process. In development thinking, there has been a change of focus towards a recognition that learning is a fundamental process in what individuals, groups, institutions and societies do. Soedjatmoko, the Indonesian development thinker and former Rector of the United Nations University, has even analysed the entire development process as primarily a learning process.*

The global learning perspective is not an isolated one; it is related to similar approaches in a number of disciplines — including inquiries in different fields into the nature and behaviour of complex systems (e.g. chaos studies). A major focus here is on the emergence of new processes of self-organization, auto-poeisis or self-creation, and autonomy — all processes that imply learning system behaviour and self-generation of meaning. This approach to learning is holistic and global, with the word "global" referring here to the total natural and social environment. Used in this sense, it goes beyond traditional concepts such as international (which strictly speaking denotes no more than relations between nations) to encompass a truly worldwide or planetary view.

Global Learning, Global Problems

The focus of this new kind of learning is on those problems which affect all societies and all levels of society. One could do worse as a starting point in defining what these are than the Charter of the United Nations University, which speaks of "pressing global problems of human survival, development and welfare." The urgency is caused not only by the obvious dangers to these three basic goals — survival, development and welfare — but also from the emerging sense that the world today is facing not only difficult re-arrangements of political, economic and ecological priorities, but a full-scale civilizational change. The challenge to learning is how to cope with a rapidly-changing set of circumstances that touches every facet of society.

Global Learning, Global Values

Perhaps the most striking feature of the scientific-intellectual context for global learning is the reaction against the traditional models in Western-dominated thinking and the consequent change in intellectual climate. There is first the emergence of new scientific paradigms, or, in the words of Nobel Laureate Ilya Prigogine, "the opening up of a new theoretical space." New theories are emerging about learning and knowledge in self-organizing, self-creating systems. They challenge the Western tradition of "understanding as a mirror of nature" with a view of creative knowledge and knowing. Knowledge does not merely reflect what it sees, it is constantly changing in response to varying situations. A global approach as it is formulated in the UNU Charter in terms of survival, development and welfare obviously expresses a set of positive values. We should be concerned, in the words of Soedjatmoko, with a search for an "ethics of human survival" relevant to our hungry, crowded and confused global society.

The state of the world, however, makes it obvious that we have not yet managed to evolve such a global morality. There is an obvious requirement not to accept poverty and violence as solutions to problems. There is the ethically more difficult question of how to provide a balance between the specific and the universal, or between competing claims at exclusive universal competence — as is clearly shown by the Salman Rushdie case.

Moral Dimensions to Learning

There are additional moral dimensions to global problems — and to global learning. One concerns the time dimension: never before have the consequences of human action — or non-action — presented such a heavy weight on future generations. Another moral concern is that of responsibility in spatial terms: decisions reached on one side of the globe very quickly affect, for good or for evil, populations on the other side. These extended dimensions in space and time carry their own moral imperatives.

The concept of social learning also carries ethical imperatives. In an evolutionary perspective, it seems an accepted idea that survival and other basic drives towards self-organization are better served by adaptability than by adaptation — that is, by a highly-developed learning capacity. The biologically acquired learning facility which has developed into the process called social learning concerns, however, not only maintenance, but also growth and development.

It must also not be overlooked that learning can be "negative" as much as "positive." There are many kinds of negative learning — whether by individuals, groups, institutions or societies. Examples, past and present, abound. The need for unlearning old behaviour patterns is obvious if we are to ensure both survival and welfare — not only for some members of the human race but for all, and not only for humans but also for other life forms with which we share this planet.

If more words were needed to justify, the moral and ethical dimensions of humanity's obligations, there are perhaps none better than those of Barbara Ward: "To act without rapacity, to use knowledge with wisdom, to respect interdependence, to operate without hubris and greed and not simply moral imperatives. They are an accurate scientific description of the means of survival. It is this compelling force of fact that may, I think, control our separatist ambitions before the overturn of our planetary life." ■

* See, for example, his Vikram A. Sarabhai Memorial Lecture, "Development as Learning," Ahmedabad, India, January 1985.

UNU UPDATE

The following is from an information circular prepared twice a year for use within the immediate UNU system. We think that such occasional reports on overall University activities may be also of interest to the world-wide readership of WORK IN PROGRESS. — **Editor**

It is now 15 years since UNU opened its headquarters in Tokyo. To commemorate this anniversary, the University has organized three international symposia. The Tokyo Symposium on the Mega-City and Mankind's Future (22-25 October 1990) reviewed the major policy responses of the mega-cities in the coming decades, with a view to produce a body of work focusing on innovative policy recommendations. This will have a special focus on the trends and the dynamism of demographic changes, the consequences of economic development and social transformation, and effective management of living conditions and resources utilization.* The Japan-ASEAN Forum on "Development and Aid in ASEAN: the Role of Japan" (19-20 November 1990) discussed issues related to development and aid in the ASEAN region and the role of Japan. This was the first of an annual series of meetings, which will serve as a regional forum in which various topics relevant to the development of the countries in this region will be taken up. The third commemorative symposium, on "the Impact of Chaos Theory on Science and Society," will be held on 15-17 April 1991, at the University of Tokyo, to explore the impact of the emerging science of chaos on various scientific disciplines and the resulting broader implications for science and society.

Together with senior colleagues, the Rector attended a meeting on Co-operation among Autonomous Research Institutes of the United Nations held on 11 July 1990 in Geneva. Organized by the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation, at the request of the General Assembly, the meeting discussed various ways and means to enhance practical co-operation among the UN research institutes, particularly in regard to the formulation and implementation of their programmes and plans. After opening the meeting, the Director-General requested the Rector to chair the meeting on his behalf. It was agreed among the institutes to work out concrete areas of co-operation in terms of joint projects as feasible (along the lines of the joint project between the University and UNRISD). The proposal by the University and UNCSTD to organize a Register of Research of the United Nations system was well received, and it was agreed to implement such a Register in a phased manner with the co-operation of the various research institutes and the UN Secretariat.

The Director-General of UNESCO has kindly offered temporary facilities at UNESCO's Regional Office of Science and Technology in Nairobi to accommodate the interim office for the Programme for Natural Resources in Africa, which is designed to lead to the full realization of the UNU's Institute for Natural Resources in Africa (UNU/INRA). The Director of the Programme, Dr. Bede Okigbo, will move to Nairobi in January 1991.

In July, Dr. Okigbo held fruitful consultations in Lusaka with the Minister of Higher Education and the University of Zambia and agreed to start the operation of the mineral resources unit and the initial programme to be undertaken within the framework of the UNDP project funding of US$1 million for UNU/INRA.

Professor Charles Cooper assumed directorship of UNU/INTECH (UNU Institute for New Technologies) on 1 October 1990. The first formal meeting of the Board of UNU/INTECH was held in Maastricht on 8-9 November to discuss the initial programme of work.

The Sasakawa Foundation's contribution of US$4 million to the University's Endowment Fund in 1990 earmarked for UNU/WIDER (UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research) has now been confirmed. It is expected that this new grant will continue on an annual basis over a five-year period (totalling US$20 million). This major addition to the University's Endowment Fund will enable UNU/WIDER to expand its work as envisaged at the time of its establishment in December 1983.

A meeting of the Management Group of the AAU-UNU Joint Regional Food and Nutrition Project for Africa was held in Brussels in June. A report of the activities undertaken since the last meeting (in Accra in November 1989) was presented and included information on a two-week workshop on research management held in Douala, Cameroon, from 20 November-2 December 1989. The workshop, primarily organized for directors of research institutions involved in the project, was attended by participants from Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Ethiopia, Mauritius, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan and Zaire. The main objectives were to identify constraints in effective management of R&D institutions, to foster institutional collaboration and to provide a blueprint on how R&D institutions should be managed.

A UNU/WIDER research conference on Hunger and Public Action was held in July 1990. It brought together some 20 high-level policy-makers and academics from Africa, South Asia and Latin America to discuss the first results of WIDER's action-oriented research programme on hunger and poverty, as described in a recent UNU/WIDER publication, *Hunger and Public Action*, co-authored by Jean Drèze and Amartya Sen.

A workshop on "Developing Country Perspectives on National and International Policy Aspects of Global Warming," sponsored by UNU, UNESCO, IFIAS (International Federation of Institutes for Advanced Study), IDRC (International Development Research Centre), the International Institute for Sustainable Development, and the Woods Hole Research Center, was held in Montebello, Canada, from 29 July-1 August 1990. The workshop was part of the preparations now underway for the Second World Climate Conference and the negotiations for a Climate Change Convention. Twenty scientific and international diplomatic and legal affairs experts participated in the meeting. The workshop focused on the needs and requirements for changing energy policies in developing countries, and the international co-operation that will be essential to such change.

An International Dietary Energy Consultancy Group workshop on Improved Protein-Energy Intakes in Early Childhood and Human Capital Formation: the Guatemala Oriente Study (1969-89) was held in Bellagio, Italy, from 30 July-3 August with financial support of the US Agency for International Development.

The 16 experts attending examined critically the results and policy implications of the INCAP (Institute of Nutrition of Central America and Panama) study, comparing the psychomotor development of pre-school children receiving a protein-rich diet with those receiving an isocaloric supplement that was almost protein-free. The effect of the supplementation was reexamined 10 and 20 years later when the children became adolescents and young adults. This showed the positive effects of the nutritional supplementation on growth rate and learning behaviour.

A UNU/WIDER conference on Privatization in Eastern Europe was held in Helsinki on 16-17 August 1990 and attended by about 20 participants from the countries of that region. The conference provided an opportunity to the policy-makers to clarify the analytics of privatization. It revealed that privatization of small scale enterprises had been successful in most of the relevant countries.

A workshop on Rapid Assessment Procedures (RAP) for Child Survival and Other Programmes of Nutrition and Primary Health Care in Brazil and Portuguese-speaking Africa was held in São Paulo from 20-25 August with 23 participants attending. The relevant UNU publications on the RAP methodology and the training manual developed by the UNU with the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) were used as training materials for the workshop. Another RAP workshop was held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 17-22 September again using the UNU publications. It focused on the use of anthropological techniques for the evaluation and improvement of nutrition and health programmes.

The first international conference on Ethics and Environmental Policies, co-sponsored by the University with Fondazione Lanza, an Italian foundation, was held at Borca di Cadore, Italy, on 31 August-1 September to study how ethical convictions and cultural values can effect environmental policies and attitudes. The conference was held within the framework of the University's Human Dimensions of Global Change Programme. Special attention was paid to the theoretical foundations of environmental values (religious and philosophical) to the decision-making process and to the current values present in individual and entrepreneurial behaviour. The UNU made a special effort to bring developing country participants to the interdisciplinary conference.

A UNU/WIDER conference in Helsinki on 3-7 September dealt with the Environment and the Emerging Development Issues. Twenty-six authoritative studies prepared by expert professionals, including Nobel laureates, were presented. The conference was an integral part of the WIDER programme on the economics of the environment, which is aimed not only at generating and codifying research on foundational matters in economic dimensions of the environment but also at disseminating its findings among teaching and research institutions, especially in the developing countries.

The UNU Global Seminar '90 on Communication and International Relations took place in Hakone, Japan, on 10-14 September with the participation of 91 students and 11 lecturers from both Japan and abroad. The programme dealt with progress in communications technology and its impacts on international political, economic and cultural relations, both from the perspectives of industrial and developing countries. This was the sixth in the series, which has brought together more than 550 students since its inception.

Former UNU Council member, Dr. Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo of Portugal, organized a small planning meeting on 24-25 September in Paris to discuss a programme of studies on women's culture to be undertaken by the University. A research plan is proposed to identify and systematize the values and the modes of behaviour representing women's culture. The meeting took into account the work already done in this area by the UN system including the University's past work on the subject. Participants included women researchers from past UNU projects and UNU/WIDER's ongoing projects.

A planning workshop on Information Processing for Decision-Making was held in Paris on 25-27 September with 20 experts in attendance. It was focused on identify information technologies that are considered appropriate for developing countries to help solve problems related to complex man-made systems and sought to formulate a research programme that may be considered for implementation by the University. A position paper describing the problems to be tackled by the UNU Project on Information and Decision Systems is now under preparation.

An international symposium was organized jointly by the University and the City of Fukuoka, Japan, on 26-27 September on the Present Status and Future Perspectives of Asia-Pacific Research: Issues of Culture and Development. The symposium, attended by some 20 scholars, mostly directors of institutes of Asian studies from 11 countries, identified the current trends and gaps in research on culture and development and reviewed the needs and prospects for regional research co-operation. ■

* The Mega-City conference proceedings will be the main focus of the next issue of WORK IN PROGRESS. — **Editor.**

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